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JUNE 2004

WORLD SOCCER comment

AT THE START of the season back in August all the talk was of how Roman Abramovich's millions would transform the landscape of European football. So it is with great sadness that we must now reflect on the fact that Chelsea have ended the season trophyless. Abramovich's attempts to buy success have won him nothing. No silverware, no cups, no saucers. Not a sausage.

I have no sympathy. Abramovich and his henchmen have behaved disgracefully in recent weeks. Chelsea's private briefings against manager Claudio Ranieri and their public courting of rival coaches have rightly attracted much criticism. Although Chelsea have done no more than other clubs have been guilty of in the past, there has been an urgency and an arrogance about their behaviour that has been thoroughly distasteful.

Chelsea are threatening to spend unprecedented amounts of money in the transfer market this summer. Two words of advice: Real Madrid. The team containing many of the world's best players were expected to sweep all before them, but also ended the season with nothing because they paid lip service to the need for a winning team rather than a collection of highly-paid individuals.

Instead, two teams with modest budgets, both from the second tier of European football, Monaco and FC Porto, made it through to the Champions League Final in Gelsenkirchen. How ironic that Fernando Morientes, the popular striker elbowed out of Madrid to make way for Ronaldo, should score the goals for Monaco that knocked Real out of the Champions League. And with Madrid still paying most of his wages!

Morientes may yet end up at Chelsea as Abramovich pursues the world's best players. Over the coming months, we are likely to hear more about the Russian's business dealings in his homeland, of how he acquired companies worth billions for a fraction of their true price. Questions will be asked of Abramovich's motives for buying Chelsea in the first place. The question will also be posed: how long before Chelsea and football outlive their usefulness for Abramovich?

Money buys all sorts of advantages, but in football it cannot guarantee success and it certainly does not ensure respect. That has to be earned and Roman Abramovich, like his expensively assembled team, still has an awful long way to go.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com)

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Paying tribute...Maradona greets an elderly Boca fan on the legendary player's last visit to watch his favourite team before being taken ill

Hand of God clings to life

Maradona cheats death after his return home from Cuba. Eric Weil reports from Buenos Aires

IN ARGENTINA, heroes are in short supply. There are no political figures for the people to look up to, no war heroes (unless you go back to the early 19th century and General Juan Jose San Martin, the liberator from Spain), no royal family to revere. So they look up to their sports heroes. There is none greater in their eyes than Diego Maradona.

When the 43-year-old was suddenly taken ill on April 18, hundreds of fans descended on the Suizo Argentina Hospital in the centre of Buenos Aires. During an all-night vigil, they posted get-well-soon notes on the walls and had to be asked to stop chanting to allow their idol and the other patients some peace.

Maradona's condition was worse this time than in 2000, when he had to be rushed to hospital under the influence of drugs and drink after a New Year's Eve party in Punta del Este, a fashionable Uruguayan beach resort.

Maradona's drug addiction is legendary. It began in the early 1980s when he was playing for Barcelona – his first overseas posting – when he was barely 20 and could not handle life away from his family for the first time. That was why Barcelona, after receiving a warning from police, were willing to transfer him to Napoli, where the situation got worse and he was hit by the first of two 15-month drug suspensions.

Over the years the drugs have caused cardiomyopathy, a serious condition that weakens and inflames the heart muscles. Maradona also suffers from water retention, which is why his weight has ballooned since he stopped playing. In Punta del Este, they found his heart was working at only 40 per cent capacity.

Doctors in Cuba, where Maradona has been in drug rehabilitation for the past four years, claimed his health had stabilised when he left to return to Buenos Aires in March. A big mistake. Maradona had already started globetrotting to farewell matches of retiring stars (in which he did not play) and also visited Japan and Colombia, where he certainly did not lead a quiet life.

Addicted to golf

Back in Argentina, he headed straight to stay at an industrialist friend's summer house in General Rodriguez, some 60km from Buenos Aires. He had little contact with the media except when he went to watch his favourite team, Boca Juniors, every week, even following them to Rosario, 340km away.

He also played a lot of golf, his favourite game since retiring. In Cuba, he would sometimes play all day and even at night – excessive by anyone's standards, let alone someone with his medical history. The rest of his time in Argentina is the stuff of conjecture – there were rumours of numerous parties – until he fell ill.

According to his private doctor, Alfredo Cahe, Maradona caught a chill playing golf in the evening which eventually caused a lung infection. Later, there was a house party; apparently he did not sleep and left at 7.30am by car to fetch one of his daughters from a disco in a northern suburb.

From there they went straight to the Boca Juniors stadium at the other end of town, where he arrived not looking well. In his private box he jumped up and down, as usual, when Boca scored, but he left before the end to drive back to General Rodriguez for a barbecue.

Afterwards, suffering from high blood pressure and irregular heart beats, Maradona was attended by Dr Cahe, who decided he needed to be in hospital. Once there, he was immediately put in intensive care and on an artificial respirator.

Little information was available for the pack of hungry journalists outside, sparking rumours that Maradona had overdosed on drugs – speculation that some media published.

Cahe emphatically denied the rumours, though he did say he was surprised at his patient's sudden turn for the worse, having checked on him every day.

At the hospital, a urine sample was taken. This, it was revealed by a normally reliable source, contained 850 micrograms of cocaine, not enough to suggest an overdose.

Artificial respiration

What the dry daily midday bulletins did not say was that if Maradona had not been put on a respirator so quickly – in order to ease the workload on his heart and lungs while under sedation – he would probably be dead.

The bulletins also avoided mention of the detrimental effects recent events in Maradona's personal life may have had on his health. He had said he was "devastated" following the split with his agent and "dear friend" Guillermo Coppola over disputed monies, while there were also worries over his ongoing divorce from wife Claudia.

Maradona had admitted that his return to Buenos Aires had been partly to fix matters concerning payments to a woman who had borne his child. Meanwhile, reports from Cuba indicated that his 19-year-old girlfriend there was expecting a baby.

A day after coming out of the intensive care unit Maradona asked to be allowed to watch the TV transmission of Argentina's friendly against Morocco. The next day, 10 days after being admitted, he decided to leave hospital – against the wishes of his doctors. He had to sign a certificate to state he was leaving of his own volition and drove out to General Rodriguez to play golf.

A week later, not surprisingly, Maradona had to be readmitted, with breathing problems. "My impression is that this may be the last opportunity we have to help Maradona," said Cahe.

There was talk among his family of changing doctors. But Maradona's health problems remain. As does Argentina's obsession with their greatest sporting hero.

Prayers for Diego...young and old keep a vigil (below and left) as their idol fights for survival

Paraguay and Brazil draw 0-0 in Asuncion in the latest round of South American World Cup qualifiers
31/03/04

Portugal lose 2-1 to Italy in a friendly at Braga's new stadium
31/03/04

Spain flatter to deceive in beating Denmark 2-0 in a friendly in Gijon
31/03/04

England goalkeeper David James is beaten in Sweden's 1-0 friendly win in Gothenburg
31/03/04

Millwall celebrate reaching the FA Cup Final
04/04/04

Perth Glory win Australia's national championship play-off Grand Final
04/04/04

Wayne Bridge's late winner against Arsenal at Highbury sends Chelsea into the Champions League semi-finals
06/04/04

The scoreboard at Stade Louis II tells the story of an amazing Champions League quarter-final second leg
06/04/04

HEADLINERS

David Beckham

England beckons after a disastrous second half of the season at Real Madrid

HAVING WADED THROUGH the sticky throng that packed El Prat airport celebrating Barcelona's first away win over Real Madrid for seven years, club president Joan Laporta announced: "I'm glad we bought Ronaldinho not David Beckham."

Nobody argued. The headlines proclaiming Beckham the 'Son of Zeus' and a 'blessing from heaven' seem a very long time ago. If the England captain does return home this summer he will do so empty-handed, his pride battered, his reputation in Spain undermined.

As this season's *galactico*, Beckham knew Madrid's successes would for ever be his. So too – and this was always the risk – their failures. And the Year of Beckham has been an abject failure. Plunged into crisis, the *galacticos* have won nothing. Beckham, meanwhile, has gone from "playing like the angels" to "playing like Forrest Gump".

A small squad and the urge to impress left Beckham in desperate need of his first-ever Christmas break. Like a mere mortal he admits to doing absolutely nothing, sitting at home and eating. Unable to make up the lost ground, the break cost him dear. It took six weeks to regain his form, by which time he was increasingly becoming a prisoner of a collapsing team.

That break was followed by a string of injuries and continuing struggles with the language. Asked what coach Carlos Queiroz's half-time instructions were, Beckham replied: "I don't know, it was all in Spanish."

Meanwhile, in the Bernabeu boardroom there were concerns about his loneliness. His lightning adaptation was partly an illusion that cracked once initial excitement gave way to normalisation.

It didn't take long for Beckham to realise the stark reality of a singular club, one run on principles very different to Manchester United. He had thought Madrid's squad so deliciously talented that they could win it all; the Spanish Cup Final defeat was a huge blow that brought to the surface repressed fears that they could, in fact, win nothing. Real Madrid, Beckham quickly discovered, are not as shiny as they seem.

Nor are the press headlines always so simpering. The workrate and attitude that earned Beckham the title of David the Lionheart has proven a double-edged sword. The people who raved about those qualities now see desperation and stupidity in his tirelessness. He became Forrest Gump – an impressive runner but an exaggerated, aimless one.

That shifting perspective was summed up by one moment against Osasuna when Beckham went storming down the right, back towards his own goal, only to turn and dash across his penalty area, pursued all the way, desperately looking for support, before sprinting up the other wing while his team-mates stood disinterestedly, hands on hips, wondering what he was up to.

And that is the point – Beckham's running appears exaggerated but Madrid's culpability as a club, a squad, is unavoidable.

Beckham is a proud man who desperately wants to win. Yet all around him, his team-mates, victims of a club policy that has bequeathed an unbelievably small squad, have reached meltdown. Beckham – not helped by Ivan Helguera's switch from midfield to centre-back, leaving him partnered by the aesthetic but ineffective Guti – tries to compensate. And tries too hard.

As Beckham looks around he sees tired bodies. More damningly, he sees players who, undermined by the divisiveness and incoherence of president Florentino Perez's 'Zidanes and Pavons' policy of youth-teamers and superstars, do not care as much as he does. His frustration is palpable, his urge to sort everything out striking; he fights too much. He has a sense of responsibility and desire lacking at Madrid and absent in Guti – one that has forced him into ever dirtier tasks, diminishing his creative importance.

'He has a sense of responsibility and desire lacking at Madrid...he looks around and sees players who do not care as much as he does'

Beckham wanted to play in the centre, it is true. But he is not Claude Makelele. Defensive midfield is not his natural role – the battling Brit tag has returned to haunt him, almost becoming a self-parody. His endless running, his refusal to hide, draws attention to him, even though the diabolical form of Zinedine Zidane and Raul is far more alarming.

This summer, Perez looks set to alter his policy, finally buying some players that Madrid actually need. For Beckham, it may be too late.

Sid Lowe

Roy Keane

The Manchester United captain, with one eye on his career after Old Trafford, made himself available again for the Republic of Ireland. But Keane, who walked out of the squad on the eve of the 2002 World Cup, was unable to play in last month's friendly against Poland because of injury.

Henrik Larsson

The Celtic striker, who is set to leave Scotland this summer when his contract expires, went back on his decision to retire from international football and made himself available for Sweden at Euro 2004. "The desire has been there all the time, but I haven't been sure about it until now," he said. "Physically I feel well, and so it wouldn't be wrong to play in Euro 2004."

San Marino

After 14 years of defeats and the occasional draw, San Marino celebrated their first international victory, 1-0, in a friendly against Liechtenstein. "We were too used to losing games and now we almost can't believe we won," said coach Giampaolo Mazza.

Rui Jorge

The Portuguese defender is set to miss Euro 2004 after testing positive for the banned substance Pulmicort following a League match against Moreirense on February 13. The 31-year-old Sporting Lisbon full-back was suspended by the Portuguese federation after a second test produced a similar result. Rui Jorge protested his innocence, claiming the traces of Pulmicort came from a nasal spray he takes for rhinitis.

Samuel Eto'o

The Cameroonian striker was, as expected, named the 2003 African Footballer of the Year by the Confederation of African Football.

Eto'o received his award at a ceremony in Yaounde, where he saw off the challenge of Nigeria and Bolton midfielder Jay-Jay Okocha and Marseille and Ivory Coast striker Didier Drogba.

The award was a recognition of the Cameroonian's performances at club level – he won the 2003 Spanish

Cup with Mallorca – and for his country at the Confederations Cup in France.

"I thank all who helped me in my career but this is an award I must dedicate to Marco," said Eto'o, referring to his late team-mate Marc-Vivien Foe, who collapsed and died during Cameroon's Confederations Cup semi-final against Colombia.

Obafemi Martins of Internazionale and Nigeria was named Young Player of the Year, while Orlando Pirates and South Africa striker Lesley Manyathela, who died in a car accident last year, was posthumously awarded the Goal of the Year. His mother collected the award.

South Korea's Olympic side beat Iraq's senior side 1-0 in a friendly in Seoul

06/04/04

Deportivo stun Milan – and Europe – winning 4-0 in the Champions League quarter-final return leg

07/04/04

Juventus beat Lazio 1-0 in the Italian League, thanks to a late goal from French international David Trezeguet

10/04/04

Osasuna celebrate beating Real 3-0 in Madrid

11/04/04

Newcastle beat PSV 2-1 in the UEFA Cup

14/04/04

Christian Worns scores Dortmund's second goal in a 2-0 defeat of Bayern

17/04/04

Sochaux celebrate their first major trophy since 1938 after beating Nantes on penalties in the French League Cup Final

17/04/04

WS WORLD SOCCER Brian Glanville

...on Arsene Wenger's obstinate streak...Sepp Blatter's fatuous stop-the-draw idea...the troubled state of Major League Soccer...European club football's utter mediocrity

IT WAS SURPRISING to see Arsene Wenger come to the defence of his fallible German keeper Jens Lehmann recently, insisting that he would still be at Arsenal next season.

This again showed that there is a strange streak of obstinacy in Wenger, never better – or more expensively – illustrated than when he so rashly sent on the hapless Pascal Cygan, out of position at that, late in the League game at home to Manchester United.

Predictably, Cygan blundered, poor fellow, and United equalised in a game they seemed to have inevitably lost.

As for Lehmann, his errors in the two European Cup games against Chelsea may be thought to have cost Arsenal qualification to the semi-finals. His blunder at Stamford Bridge was especially gratuitous, when he heedlessly rushed out of his area, drove the ball against the advancing Eidur Gudjohnsen, and found himself stranded as the Icelander gave Chelsea the lead.

At Tottenham, where Arsenal took the point they needed to win the Premiership, it was Lehmann who threw two points away when he so gratuitously tangled with home side forward Robbie Keane. He thus gave away the penalty from which Spurs equalised.

Lehmann is a fiery fellow who was lucky indeed not to have been suspended rather than fined when he threw the ball at Southampton's Kevin Phillips. And neither he nor fellow German international keeper Oliver Kahn comes out well with their mutual denigration.

ALAS, I must once again trot out the words of that ironic German journalist: "Sepp Blatter has 50 new ideas every day, and 51 of them are bad" – such as replacing the throw-in with a kick-in, enlarging the goals, and playing matches in 20-minute segments.

'No more bird-brained protests, please, from US soccer journalists insisting Pele's 'best 125' list should have contained more women players'

Now comes the fatuity of suggesting that the draw as such be abolished, that every tied game be decided on penalties.

What sloppy thinking! Shades of the earlier days of American League football, when the unacceptable idea of a draw led to the fiasco of a shoot-out, with the players running from some way out at the opposing goalkeeper.

Surprisingly, at least one English columnist has embraced the daft idea, on the grounds that it might induce teams that play defensively for a draw to be more adventurous.

But why would it? It's just as likely that such teams would be still more encouraged – like the deeply negative Red Star Belgrade in the infamous 1991 European Cup Final in Bari – to hold on to the draw in the hope of ultimately winning on penalties.

A penalty shoot-out is in any case a dismally arbitrary and unsatisfactory way of winning a game. It reached its ultimate depths when penalties finally decided a World Cup Final, at Pasadena in 1994.

To Blatter, I would commend the words of Prime Minister Clement Attlee to the gadfly Professor Harold Laski: "A period of silence on your part would be appreciated."

MORE, a little more, about Pele's absurd 'best 125 players' list. I am indebted to my colleague Paul Gardner for the information that the USA women's team lost 4-1 to a Californian Youth Under-17 team last April. No more bird-brained protests, please, from American soccer journalists insisting Pele's list should have contained more, rather than fewer, women players.

In passing, that grovelling obeisance to political correctness and women's lib was an implicit insult to masculine American footballers. None I can think of would serve to be on Pele's list, which as we know excluded the likes of Tom Finney, John Charles and Gerson. All their recent internationals, however, would have an infinitely greater claim than any American woman. In the 2002 World Cup, the USA team acquitted themselves wonderfully well; I'll not easily forget watching the ebullient victory over Portugal, and there was more to come.

The sadness of it all is that such immense improvement in the American game doesn't and probably cannot show itself in terms of attendances in Major League Soccer. It's a vicious circle. Poor attendances, scarce money, no ability to attract the stars of Europe and South America – as, once upon a time, the New York Cosmos could, backed by Time Warner and the brothers Ahmet and Neshui Ertegun.

Broadly speaking, soccer in the States remains what a young intellectual called it years ago, an un-American activity. Yes, there are soccer moms in abundance, ferrying their pampered offspring to and from football; there are untold millions of women actually playing the game. But the suburban boys don't, with rare exceptions, turn into professional players, nor do they even become fans of MLS.

So the paradox of higher and higher stands, better and better achievements, at international level and a soccer league that struggles to survive looks likely to continue.

NEVER have top footballers earned, if that be the word, so much. Seldom has there been a European club season of such utter mediocrity. Not least the Premiership where, week after week, I have sat through games of paralysing boredom, hoping desperately, when on Saturdays I'm obliged to send a 'running report' during the match, for something significant to happen.

Arsenal's long unbeaten spell should be seen in this perspective. Unquestionably, they have been far and away the best team in the competition, but they failed in the Champions League, they failed in the FA Cup, and all too often their successes, not least when they thrashed Leeds 5-0 at Highbury, have looked like essays in rabbit-killing.

But are things any better in Italy and Spain? Real Madrid's season has been a disaster, collapsing away to modest Monaco, losing 3-0 at home to Osasuna, 2-0 away to a Deportivo La Coruna team packed with reserves, for ever floundering in defence.

Milan may have won the Italian title, but in Europe they crashed in La Coruna and have had enormous difficulty in getting the better – even on occasions, surviving – against lesser opposition at San Siro. Juventus, once so mighty, collapsed 4-3 at home to unfashionable Lecce, then went down in Perugia to a goal – the immutable law of the 'ex' again – scored by their former striker Fabrizio Ravanelli, the man they so ruthlessly discarded immediately after winning the 1996 European Cup. This was all the sweeter for Ravanelli, as he was playing for his original club.

As for Inter, who so flattered to deceive when they won in the Champions League at Highbury, the less said the better, one dismal Serie A result following another.

'Real Madrid's season has been a disaster, collapsing away to modest Monaco and for ever floundering in defence'

Read Brian Glanville's weekly column at www.worldsoccer.com

Notes & quotes

"The most tired man on the pitch was the Depor physio."
FC Porto coach Jose Mourinho complains about time-wasting by Deportivo players during the Champions League semi-final.

"We have suffered shocking treatment from referees this season. We've been condemned to Serie B thanks to a vendetta orchestrated by federation chief [Franco] Carraro."
As controversial as ever, Perugia president Luciano Gaucci threatens to withdraw his team from the final few matches of the season. He backed down.

Dead beat...Chelsea's Jesper Gronkjaer

"I found the Chelsea players tired. English football is reaping the consequences of its poor schedule. If you force players to turn out every two or three days, you end up paying for it."
Arsenal star Robert Pires has his own take on Chelsea's 3-1 loss to Monaco in the Champions League semi-final first leg.

"Nothing is Possible."
Cameroon's kit suppliers Puma run an advert bemoaning FIFA's decision to dock the Indomitable Lions six points in the 2006 World Cup qualifying campaign.

Monaco beat Chelsea 3-1 in their Champions League semi-final first leg in Monte Carlo

20/04/04

FC Porto and Deportivo play out a goalless draw in the first leg of their semi-final

21/04/04

Zinedine Zidane is named as UEFA's all-time greatest European player at the confederation's 50th anniversary congress in Limassol

22/04/04

Arsenal, still unbeaten in the English Premiership, celebrate winning the League title after a 2-2 draw at north London rivals Tottenham

25/04/04

Real Madrid lose further ground to Valencia in the Spanish title race after a 2-0 defeat at Deportivo

01/05/04

WS WORLD SOCCER **Paul Gardner**

The long and short of it

Bigger players do not make a better game

ARE FOOTBALLERS bigger than they used to be? Oh yes, they are, I'm quite sure of that. Can I prove it? Er, no. Except in the case of goalkeepers, who are so obviously larger and louder and noisier that no proof is needed.

But for the real players, it's not so easy. Documentation is lacking. I want to know the answer to this one, because if there is a growing band of soccer monsters, I want to know what effects these heavier and taller (and presumably stronger and faster) players might be having on the game.

As neither FIFA nor any other responsible, and wealthy, soccer organisation has deigned to offer me a large grant of money, this is something I'm having to manage on my own, so my research for the moment is a little, shall we say, narrowly focused.

You can blame the Poles for this one. Or the beanPoles, as I wittily named them, watching the Polish boys line up for their national anthem at the 1993 World Under-17 Championship. The shortest player was the goalkeeper; the rest all seemed to be about 6ft 4in.

I dived deep into the official FIFA tournament statistics to see if I was hallucinating – and found no mention anywhere of heights and weights. I found numbers, positions, dates of birth, clubs – but no heights or weights.

I then looked at all the FIFA statistics I could lay my hands on – for all the World Cups, at any age level, in any year. Apparently, FIFA has something against vital statistics. It never mentions them.

I thought I had the answer because, looking in the brochures handed out by each Under-17 team, I discovered that many included heights and weights. So I asked a member of FIFA's technical staff why they didn't include them in the official reports.

"Because we can't trust them," was his answer. Which meant that I could not rely on the only statistics that I could find.

Since then I have discovered FIFA did a study on footballers' dimensions after the 1994 World Cup. It found that there was a "trend" towards bigger players, but couldn't decide if this was simply because the general population was getting larger all the time, or because soccer coaches were systematically selecting the big guys.

A vital point. If coaches are going for bigger players, then in the Darwinian structure of evolution, natural selection will be replaced by coaches' selection. And – certainly at the top level – the game will become a sport *only* for big guys.

'We may be squeezing the little guys out. No more Zolas, Romarios or Maradonas'

Another study is being conducted in England by the FA that will measure all the physical properties of young players – heart rate, jumping, sprinting, stamina and so on. The idea here is evidently to build up an identikit of the physical attributes that a good footballer should possess, and thus to…well, I guess, mould young players accordingly. Can cloning be far behind?

Appliance of science

That is the problem with scientists, they always get carried away in the search for scientific perfection. As I'm totally convinced that football is far too varied an activity to allow for even the idea of a perfect footballer, I feel inclined to mock their overly serious research.

Alas, that would be a huge mistake. You just know that once all the testing is over and the perfect height for a midfielder has been scientifically established as, say, Patrick Vieira's towering 6ft 4in with matching weight and speed, then the academies will give us a steady supply of just such players.

It's amusing to imagine how Garrincha, with two left feet, and Franz Beckenbauer with no left foot at all, and the stoop-shouldered Stanley Matthews and the fireplug-shaped Gerd Muller would do on all of these tests.

Poorly, no doubt. The only tests they'd all pass would be whether they could play or not. But scientists with instruments can't measure that talent, and I doubt they ever will be able to.

So my research, when I get round to it, will consist of nothing more spectacular than collecting statistics, comparing them from year to year, or decade to decade, and establishing whether there's a trend towards bigger players.

If there is – and, of course, there will be – then I want to know: are these bigger players giving us a better game? Or, more significantly, are they giving us a *different* game?

In one important area we already know the answer to that: the game is faster than it used to be. But what other effects might sheer size have on the game? If the players are taller, does that automatically mean more aerial play? If they're heavier, is the game rougher?

Little guys lose out

If, through lack of knowledge or lack of action, we allow the big guys to dominate, then my big fear is that we may be squeezing the little guys out of the game. No more Zolas, or Romarios or Maradonas?

Of course, I'm aware that 'little' is a comparative term. As the height of the population goes up, so too does the size of little guys. But until that far distant day of giants, when someone of six feet is considered a midget, let us try to conserve the unique skills that our little guys possess. Their lightning turns, their intricate dribbling, their dazzlingly quick footwork.

If we want to be sure of retaining those qualities, we need to know how to modify our game to make sure they remain vital talents.

That's why we need to know – and the Under-17 level is the place to start – whether a point has been reached where the coaches have decided that bigger is better.

Little man, big impact...Romario (right)

Notes & quotes

"I have enough seasoning for my meals to last me until the end of the year."
Estudiantes boss Carlos Bilardo comments on having bags of salt poured on him by fans of Gimnasia before a recent game in Argentina.

"East Germany never lost so heavily in Romania."
Energie Cottbus coach Eduard Geyer strikes a blow for the old DDR after Germany lost 5-1 in a friendly in Bucharest.

Still bitter...David Ginola

"I still find it scandalous that I was not picked for France's World Cup squad in 1998. I was the best French player at that time and I didn't even make the 40-man shortlist."
David Ginola continues to bear a grudge against former France boss Aime Jacquet.

"They [journalists] treat me like a teddy bear."
Benfica coach Jose Antonio Camacho storms out of a press conference, throwing his toys out of the pram as he goes.

Defeat at Bolton condemns Leeds to relegation to the First Division

02/05/04

Milan celebrate their 17th Serie A title after a 1-0 win over closest rivals Roma

02/05/04

Porto beat Deportivo 1-0 in La Coruna to reach the Champions League Final

04/05/04

Monaco come from 2-0 down to draw 2-2 with Chelsea at Stamford Bridge and join Porto in the Champions League Final

05/05/04

WS WORLD SOCCER **Tim Vickery**

Popularity contest

Why are English stadiums full while Brazil's lie empty?

WHAT A SENSE of occasion there is about even the most run-of-the-mill Premiership match – at least to these eyes, which are more accustomed to scanning the sad empty spaces in Brazilian stadiums.

All those 1970s and 1980s predictions that English football was dying sound comical now – rather like the general whose famous last words as he surveyed the enemy were "they couldn't hit an elephant at this dist…"

As is so often the case with football, the success of the Premiership surely goes well beyond the game itself.

In his 1968 classic *The Football Man*, Arthur Hopcraft sought to explain the importance of the game in English life. "The working class saw it as an escape out of drudgery," he wrote, "and claimed it as their own…The game lives like an extra pulse in the people of industrial England."

The low-technology, labour-intensive factory experience shaped the way football was played and appreciated. Teamwork, dependability and physical strength were as important down the mine or on the shop floor as they were on the football field.

English society has gone through massive changes since Hopcraft's book was published.

Perhaps it is here that the appeal of the Premiership is in part explained. Amid the disconcerting rush towards becoming a post-industrial theme park, English football offers a reassuring point of contact with the values of the disappearing industrial society – just as the long-running *Coronation Street* soap opera got going as the real Coronation Streets, with their old collective lifestyle, were being demolished.

It is a very different story in

'Alan Shearer could almost have stepped out of a Soviet poster idealising the pre-war factory worker'

So too has its football, with its razzamatazz, state-of-the-art stadiums and foreign players.

But the essence of what happens on the field is remarkably unchanged. It is still recognisably English football, with the traditional virtues as much in favour as ever. Just look at Alan Shearer, one of the icons of the contemporary game. He could almost have stepped out of a Soviet poster idealising the pre-war factory worker.

South America. Football here is indeed the sport of the 20th-century urban explosion. But its values are far less industrial – hardly surprising since the continent has always been primarily geared towards the export of raw materials. South American football has much more to do with feudal notions of prestige and hierarchy.

It began bathed in First World light, introduced by the British. It was then re-interpreted by South Americans, becoming an activity made to measure for those of stocky build and low centre of gravity – which brought international triumphs and recognition to a region starved of either.

The feudal sense of hierarchy is strongest in Brazil, with its general contempt for teams seen as having no tradition. Indeed, it is only slowly being accepted that big teams should be relegated if they finish last. The argument to re-instate fallen giants has always been presented on moral grounds, as if it were a crime against nature to have, say, Fluminense in the Second Division.

One of the Brazilian game's biggest attractions, however, is the chance it offers to dribble round the usual rigid rules of hierarchy. But unlike the class solidarity of English football, this is a moment of individual expression. The player who, with a feint can dump his opponent on the seat of his pants, is the serf who became king, the humiliated who became humiliator. He lives out the dream of millions. He is the idol, and his presence puts thousands on the gate.

The fact nearly all of his kind have been seduced by Europe is one explanation for all those empty spaces in the stands.

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Move over Madrid

So-solid Valencia overhaul the faltering galacticos to take the League title

SID LOWE in Madrid

THEY MAY NOT be *galacticos*, but they are Spain's best team. Valencia are deservedly La Liga champions for the second time in three years, the sixth time in their history.

Trailing defending champions Real Madrid by eight points just two months ago, Rafa Benitez's side were seven points clear and unreachable with two matches left, having won eight and drawn two of their last 10. They had three chances to clinch the title and needed just one of them – away to Sevilla, hardly the easiest place to get a result, where Real Madrid were stuffed 4-1.

A first loss in 18 games for Barcelona and crisis-ridden Madrid's third successive home defeat – 3-2 by a Mallorca side led by the brilliant African Footballer of the Year Samuel Eto'o – meant that victory in Seville and Valencia would be champions. Solid, organised and as utterly professional as ever, they wasted no time at all. Left-winger Vicente, the first among Valencia's equally outstanding performers this season, raced on to a clever flick from Xisco and beat Esteban at the near post after 11 minutes.

It should have been two soon after when Jorge Lopez wrongly had a goal disallowed for offside, but it hardly mattered. In the final minute, following a slightly nervy second half, during which Santiago Canizares made a superb save at Antonito's feet, Ruben Baraja made sure of victory after a typical burst into the box.

As the final whistle blew, Valencia's players embraced in tears. The most emotional was Roberto Ayala, who has once again laid claim to being the best defender in the world.

Some thought that the Argentinian centre-back, who had promised his children that he wouldn't cut his hair until Valencia won something, was crying in delight at finally being able to shed his unusually long locks. In fact, said Ayala, "I was crying because of everything I have been through, it has been a difficult time."

He was referring to Madrid's abortive, 11th-hour attempt to sign him last summer. That left Valencia's fans furious, just as another bid, for Predrag Mijatovic, had first sparked a now bitter rivalry between the clubs. Ayala found himself in the middle of an ugly and deeply political tug-of-war. How thankful he must be now that the move never came off.

Fiesta time ...Valencia fans take to the streets after the title triumph

Orti and the fan

So too Jaime Orti, the president who fought so hard to keep him, even at the reported cost of an extra £300,000 a year. Wearing a bright orange curly wig, he paraded the pitch with his now famous five-metre wide Spanish fan. This first made an appearance with the *Ches'* League title success in 1971 and then spent 30 years in a cupboard before reappearing two years ago when Valencia last won the League. That two-title end to a three-decade wait speaks volumes about the current side.

Drenched in champagne, Orti paid tribute to the near 3,000 fans who painted Sevilla's Sanchez Pizjuan stadium orange. Meanwhile, many, many thousands more took to the streets in Valencia, the home of fireworks, lighting up the sky and leaving the pavements shuddering in delight. Those that danced long into the night could not resist a dig at Madrid, chanting: "No League! No Cup! No Champions League!"

True, it has been a dreadful year for Madrid, who plunged into crisis during the final two months of the season, but that should take nothing away from Valencia's success. Two titles in three years is no fluke – and there was still the UEFA Cup Final against Marseille to come. Indeed, the contrast between Valencia and Madrid, a team so ludicrously talented as to be almost comical, sums up why the *Ches* have been so superior this season.

"Money isn't everything; this is the league of humility," said captain David Albelda with a smile, while Benitez, whose achievement since arriving from Tenerife three years ago is truly magnificent, added: "We are a TEAM, with capital letters."

He is right. Hard work, organisation, solidarity and mental toughness have been fundamental. Valencia make virtually no mistakes. "We may not have stars, but we do have players that can make the difference at a given moment," said Ayala. "And, more importantly, we were aware that we had to stay together and really work hard as a team to achieve anything this year."

Benitez might have complained at the start of the season that sporting director Jesus Garcia Pitarch had "brought me a lamp when I asked for a sofa", but Valencia also had two strong players for every position. Benitez rotated seamlessly and cleverly. Valencia won the title in Sevilla with Baraja, Pablo Aimar, Mauricio Pellegrino and Miguel Angel Angulo on the bench; against Mallorca, Madrid could call on Fernandez Borja, Javier Portillo, Juanfran and Alvaro Mejia. The difference could hardly be starker.

Only veteran full-back Amedeo Carboni hasn't been rotated, due to a long-term injury suffered by Fabio Aurelio. Refreshingly honest and down-to-earth, a man who walks to and from the stadium, his bag slung over his shoulder as if he's going for a park kickabout, the 39-year-old has nonetheless been superb.

So has the entire defence. Canizares is in line to win his third Zamora (best keeper) award in four years, and with two games left, Valencia had conceded 24 goals – half as many as Real Madrid, 10 fewer than nearest challengers Deportivo and Osasuna.

That may make Valencia sound defensive or even plain dull. Not so, despite what some truly pathetic sniping from the press would have you believe. "We always go out to win games, we don't play for draws," insisted Benitez. Valencia have scored 70 goals – as many as Madrid and more than any other club. Only on four occasions have they failed to find the net, and that despite going through much of the season without playmaker Aimar or summer signing Jorge Lopez. Vicente has scored 12 from left-midfield, Baraja has again weighed in with his share, Ricardo Oliveira has eight from the bench. Only Carboni has not scored this season.

And the big surprise has been 19-goal Mista, who looked like he might be on his way at the start of the season and now could, just, nab a Euro 2004 squad place. Back in August, many doubted that Valencia had the firepower to win the League. How wrong they – we – were. Mista, Vicente, Baraja, Oliveira...the entire team have put paid to that. Rarely has a championship-winning side been such a team. Valencia are truly champions.

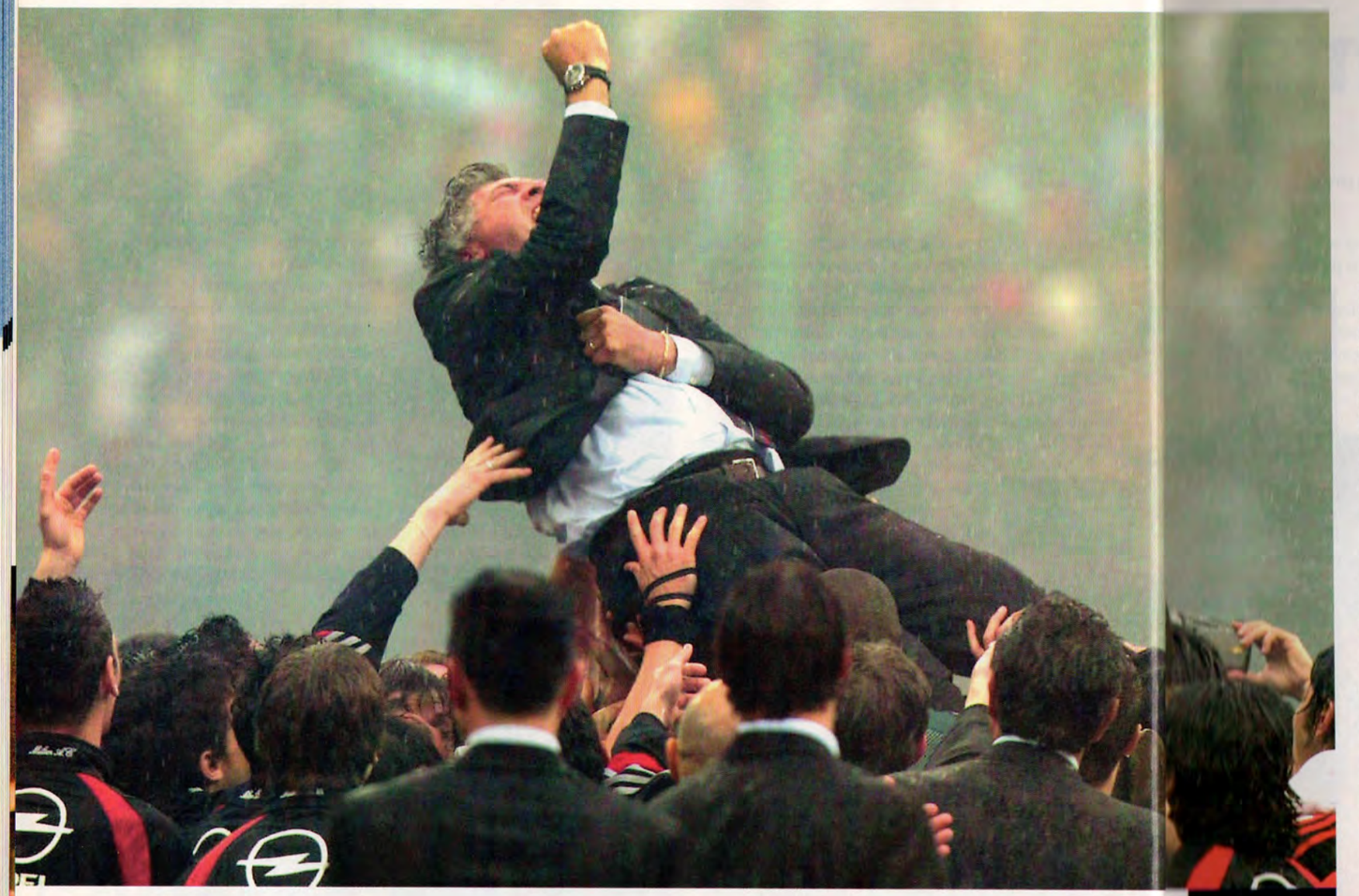
● "How ugly is Ronaldinho...there was no point in buying him, it wasn't worth it. He is so ugly that he'd sink you as a brand. Between Ronaldinho and Beckham, I'd go for Beckham 100 times. Just look how handsome Beckham is, the class he has, the image. The whole of Asia has fallen in love with us because of Beckham. Ronaldinho was too ugly to sign."

So spoke an unnamed member of the inner circle of Real Madrid president Florentino Perez, explaining why the club didn't sign Ronaldinho. Priorities anyone?

Looks aren't everything...Ronaldinho

'We may not have stars but we have players who can make a difference'

Valencia defender Roberto Ayala



Ancelotti aloft... the Milan players hoist their coach in triumph

Milan by a mile

The Serie A title was secured with two games to spare

PADDY AGNEW in Rome

IN THE END, the final showdown lasted less than two minutes. For months, pundits had pointed to the third last day of the season, May 2, as the one when Serie A would be decided. That day, leaders Milan would be home to closest challengers Roma. But when it dawned, Milan were six points clear of their opponents, and even if Roma pulled off a win, Carlo Ancelotti's men would need just four points from their last two games to wrap up the title.

Lest there be any doubt about it, however, Milan settled the business after less than two minutes. Brazilian wonder boy Kaka – who else? – skipped past two hapless Roma tackles out on the right and then crossed to a completely unmarked Andrii Shevchenko, who headed what turned out to be the title-winning goal. Game, set and match and Milan had not even broken sweat.

Were it not for the reprehensible behaviour of some of the Roma fans, a report of the 'title decider' would end there. The visiting team were understandably stunned by their wretched start and it was only after half-time that they mounted any sort of serious challenge. At this point a hotly contested refereeing decision then enlivened matters. In the opening seconds of the second half, a Roma free-kick by Francesco Totti was blocked and deflected for a corner by the upraised elbow of Shevchenko, standing in the wall. Penalty, screamed Totti. Corner, replied referee Domenico Messina.

The issue was rendered all the more contentious by the fact that exactly the same thing had happened to Milan when playing Siena two weeks earlier. Again Shevchenko, anxious to protect his recently damaged mouth, had handled the ball while standing in a wall. The difference on that occasion was that the referee, Pierluigi Collina, awarded a penalty to Siena.

The implication of that decision was not lost on the Roma fans. Soon, they began to vent their frustration by throwing smoke bombs and coins at Milan keeper Dida, standing at the end nearest them.

The fan violence was not only reprehensible but it was also stupid since it killed off whatever last chance their side had of getting back into the game. Injuries to Dida and team-mate Gennaro Gattuso forced the game to be stopped, effectively breaking up Roma's attacking rhythm.

In the end, as the rain poured down, Milan picked up their 17th Italian title and the seventh since Silvio Berlusconi bought the club in February 1986. Speaking to his players in the dressing-room afterwards, the Prime Minister reportedly thanked them for pulling off "the best League title of the lot", one that was worth more than the others because of Milan's record points haul.

But it is debatable that this was their best title-winning year. Make no mistake, this is a good Milan side and one worthy of taking the championship. When the season began, it was clear all opponents had reason to fear a side that could call on Shevchenko in attack, ball-winner Gattuso in midfield, Andrea Pirlo as playmaker and Alessandro Nesta and Paolo Maldini in central defence. What we did not know then was that Brazilian Kaka would prove to be one of the most exciting arrivals in Italian football in years, that his veteran compatriot Cafu would manage another top-level season, that Dutchman Clarence Seedorf would refind his best form and that veteran Billy Costacurta would earn his place all season long.

Poor-quality rivals

Yet, the suspicion remains that Milan's record points haul owes at least something to the poor quality of their main rivals, Roma excepted. While Roma took the fight down to the third last day, Juventus, Internazionale and Lazio had long since abandoned any title pretensions. Indeed, Milan's only serious failure this season, their 4-0 Champions League defeat by Deportivo La Coruna, seemed to have been provoked by a sense of presumption, partly engendered by the ease with which they had swept all before them in Serie A.

Even Roma's challenge left something to be desired since coach Fabio Capello insisted on playing the entire season without a centre-forward. If he had opted to play a genuine target man (John Carew, for example) rather than limit his striker options to the prodigiously talented, but lightweight Totti-Antonio Cassano pairing, then things might have been different.

Roma's future is less than clear given their well-documented financial problems. There could yet be a garage sale of their best players, with defender Walter Samuel, midfielder Emerson and even local hero Totti all ripe for picking. As for Capello, he too may be on the move (to Inter or Real Madrid), with Perugia's Serse Cosmi among those tipped to succeed him.

● "I don't have a relationship with [coach Alberto] Zaccheroni. I'd rather train than sit on the bench and come on for a quarter of an hour." The words of Internazionale striker Christian Vieri, who refused to be a substitute in a recent League game with Bologna and looks certain to leave the club in the summer.

Just no substitute...Christian Vieri

The news that Juventus would be parting company with their coach, Marcello Lippi, came as no surprise. The Old Lady has performed some way short of the admittedly very high standards of recent seasons under his charge.

Lippi was guilty of having remained loyal to a group of players – Ciro Ferrara, Paolo Montero, Antonio Conte, Mark Iuliano, Gianluca Pessotto – who had served him nobly in the past but who had passed their sell-by-date. However, the coach can hardly be blamed for failing to predict European Player of the Year Pavel Nedved would play well short of his best form for much of the season. Nor can Lippi be held responsible for the injuries and subsequent loss of form experienced by Alessandro Del Piero.

In announcing his departure from Juventus, Lippi did admit to having had a role in another of the major setbacks of the season – the breakdown of relations with midfielder Edgar Davids. The coach ruefully commented that perhaps he had not tried hard enough to persuade the Dutchman to stay in Turin, rather than head for Barcelona last January.

Former Juventus player and current Parma coach Cesare Prandelli is tipped to take over at Juve. He will have earned his right to a crack at the job thanks to a brilliant season with crisis-ridden, cash-strapped Parma. They defied all their troubles by remaining in contention for a Champions League spot right down to the last day.

The season ended against the backdrop of yet more match-fixing allegations. Twelve clubs (Chievo, Lecce, Reggina, Siena in Serie A; Ascoli and Piacenza in B; Catanzaro, Crotone, Fermana, Lumezzane, Sassari Torres and Taranto in C) as well as five players (Generoso Rossi, Roberto D'Aversa and Nicola Ventola of Siena, Salvatore Ambrosino of Grosseto and Vincenzo Onorato of Juve Stabia) have been named in an investigation that emerged out of police surveillance of Neapolitan mafia boss Giacomo Cavalcanti.

Investigators believe the players named may form part of a wider network of players who combined to have a series of games fixed. Already, Empoli and Modena – Siena's fellow relegation battlers – have announced they will take legal action in order to challenge their rivals' Serie A survival. Another long, hot summer in the courthouse looks assured for Italian football.

'As the rain fell, Milan picked up their seventh title under Berlusconi'

Slammed after slaughter

The national team's 5-1 drubbing by Romania brought a torrent of abuse from press and pundits

NICK BIDWELL in Munich

THE GERMAN MEDIA had a field day following the national team's recent 5-1 thumping by Romania in Bucharest. Within a few hours of the debacle, the press gang had delivered their own form of summary justice. The verdict was unanimous – *Nationalmannschaft* coach Rudi Voller and his players were dead men walking.

TV commentators and analysts competed with each other for the number of times they could utter the words 'humiliation', 'embarrassing' and 'catastrophe', former Germany stars queued up to talk about the good old days of World Cup and European Championship triumphs, while the tabloids, in particular *Bild*, assumed the role of comic assassin.

A dozen years after *The Sun* called then England boss Graham Taylor a turnip in the wake of a loss to Sweden at Euro 92, *Bild* also chose to link sporting failure with vegetables. "With this bunch of cucumbers, we must not go to Portugal," the paper screamed. "Rudi, please, stay at home."

This is just a breeze, boys ...Razvan Rat leads the party after scoring Romania's second goal

The crude criticism might not be to everyone's taste, but in many ways the barbs were justified. A performance of stunning ineptitude resulted in one of Germany's worst reverses. For a once-proud footballing nation, the transformation from chosen few to unwanted has been too much to bear.

Four-nil down at the break – their heaviest half-time deficit in 90 years – Germany should, in truth, have been further behind. In marked contrast to the pace, guile and verve of the impressive Romanians, Voller's men were a complete shambles. Carsten Ramelow and Jens Jeremies were all at sea in their roles as stop-gap centre-backs, Hertha Berlin's Arne Friedrich was constantly overrun at right-back, and Romanian runners from midfield were virtually waved through.

The Romanian goals, scored by Mihaita Plesan, Razvan Rat, Ionel Danciulescu (two) and Gheorghe Caramarin, were set-up and finished with a masterly flourish, but every one also involved sloppy German defending.

Nor were the Germans only found wanting at the back. In midfield they were cumbersome and incapable of stringing two passes together, the standard of crossing on the rare occasion they did make inroads on the flanks was abysmal, and up front Fredi Bobic and Kevin Kuranyi offered honest toil but little else.

Late consolation

Switching from a defensive quartet to a three-man back line after the restart, Germany at least had a better shape, restricting Romania to only one more goal and scoring a late consolation thanks to a deflected shot from young Stuttgart left-back Philipp Lahm. But the damage, of course, had already been done.

Perhaps we should reassess just how strong the Bundesliga really is. The likes of Werder Bremen's Fabian Ernst and Dortmund's Torsten Frings are regularly lionised for the way they dominate midfield in League games. Yet both sunk without trace in Romania.

A grim-faced Voller could only throw himself on the mercy of the court of public opinion. "As far as the first-half performance was concerned, there can be no excuse," he said. "Each of our mistakes was punished. I felt worse after the 5-1 defeat by England in Munich in 2001 but it still hurts."

The one straw to which Voller can clutch – and one conveniently ignored by the media – is the fact that his line-up in Bucharest was very much make-do-and-mend. Kaiserslautern striker Miroslav Klose and Dortmund stopper Christian Worns were out through injury, while key midfielder Michael Ballack and central defenders Jens Nowotny and Frank Baumann all failed late fitness tests. Only shortly before kick-off did Jeremies and Ramelow find out they were starting, and how it showed.

● Werder Bremen clinched their first Bundesliga title since 1993 by beating closest rivals Bayern 3-1 in Munich. It was Bayern's first home defeat of the season and meant Werder had won the League with two games to spare.

Ivan Klasnic, Johan Micoud and Ailton scored for Werder, before Roy Makaay pulled one back for Bayern.

"I think it is sensational what this team has achieved," said jubilant Werder coach Thomas Schaaf. "The fact [Bayern general manager] Uli Hoeness congratulated us shows there is mutual respect."

Shield of dreams...Ailton lifts the trophy

However, the mitigating circumstances route does not lead far. Although nominally midfielders, both Jeremies and Ramelow have played in central defence before and neither is exactly a novice. The pair have amassed almost 100 caps between them and should have done better, but then so should the whole team.

Two schools of thought have emerged since the Romania hammering. For the conservatives such as former Germany boss Jupp Derwall, the only option Voller has is to press on with his current squad, arguing that they are the best men available and that it is too late for experiments anyway.

But in the eyes of a larger group, radical surgery is needed now. They demand the axing of players not sure of a first-team place for their clubs (Leverkusen forward Oliver Neuville, Bayern Munich's Jeremies, and Bobic at Hertha Berlin), with new faces such as Koln's teenage striker Lukas Podolski, Bayern midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger and Bochum centre-back Frank Fahrenhorst parachuted in immediately.

Another cast as a possible national team saviour is prolific Hansa Rostock striker Martin Max, whose goals this season have helped keep the club clear of their usual relegation struggles. However, when a 35-year-old is touted for a first full cap, it is clear all is not well in the German game and panic has set in.

Despite Derwall and co claiming it would be counter-productive to blood youngsters at the 11th hour, Voller may well be tempted to give a chance to the prodigious talents of 18-year-old Podolski. Fast, skilful, sturdy and fearless, he has been a sensation in his first season in the Bundesliga, and Voller obviously rates him.

"In just a few months Lukas has made enormous progress," he said. "He has a great left foot, shoots powerfully and is hungry for goals. We've been keeping a close eye on him. I don't know if he will be on the plane for the European Championship but he's one of the alternatives we're considering."

As for Podolski, he has no doubts he is ready for a summer in Portugal. "Age doesn't come into playing international football," he said. "What matters is that your performances are good enough. I give all I have in every game and never let pressure get to me. It doesn't matter who I'm up against, I want to show what I'm made of."

Sounds like a young Matthaus or Effenberg. Right now, the *Nationalmannschaft* could certainly use some of his self-belief.

'We can't go with this bunch of cucumbers'

Bild blasts Germany's prospects in Portugal

Exchange of views...Flamengo (hoops) and Vasco da Gama players square up during the controversial Carioca Final

Blame it on Rio

Six players were sent off during another disgraceful Carioca state championship Final

BRIAN HOMEWOOD in Rio de Janeiro

LAST YEAR'S CARIOCA (Rio) state championship Final was always going to be a difficult act to follow. The match between Vasco da Gama and Fluminense produced 78 fouls and three red cards, including one for Vasco coach Antonio Lopes, who sparked a 10-minute brawl by throwing the ball at an injured player and then refused to leave the pitch. After the match, Vasco midfielder Marcelinho Carioca paraded around the field with a banner that read: "Jesus, this victory is yours."

This year, however, Vasco and Flamengo managed to conjure up an even more depraved spectacle. The second leg of the Final followed a week in which 12 people were killed as rival drug gangs fought for control of Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro's largest *favela* (slum), in a turf war that spiralled out of the control of the authorities. The climate of violence that engulfed the city appeared to contaminate the 22 players, who produced a match of quite astounding brutality. Six were sent off, although that tally could easily have doubled if the referee had come even close to applying the laws of the game.

The mutual provocation that preceded the match also contributed to the poisonous atmosphere on the field. Vasco president Eurico Miranda got the ball rolling four days before kick-off when he announced that he had already bought 30,000 litres of beer to stage a celebration for the club's supporters once they had won the title – even though Flamengo were 2-1 ahead after the first leg.

Then a television crew filming a Vasco training session caught coach Geninho apparently instructing his players to kick the opposition. "If he stands still, kick his ankle," he shouted. Brazilian media interpreted the remark as being aimed at Flamengo playmaker Felipe, who had repeatedly tormented the Vasco defenders in the first leg and had tried to lure them into making rash tackles by standing still with the ball between his feet.

Needless to say, every tackle on Felipe in the second leg was greeted with howls of derision by the Flamengo supporters, and it was a reckless kick at the Flamengo No 10 by Vasco midfielder Coutinho early in the second half that began the red-card feast.

Felipe himself followed in the 73rd minute, along with team-mate Henrique and opponents Valdir and Victor Boleta after a punch-up on the touchline. Two minutes later, Vasco's Ygor was dismissed for a tackle from behind.

At that stage, it looked as if the match might not finish. Flamengo, leading 3-1 on the day, were 5-2 ahead on aggregate; Vasco, down to seven men, the minimum needed to continue, must have been sorely tempted to have another player either feign injury or get deliberately sent off to force the match to be abandoned. But, unlike the 1999 Paulista championship Final, which was abandoned in the 75th minute after Palmeiras players attacked Edilson of Corinthians for playing keepy-up in the centre-circle, this one reached the final whistle.

There was no further scoring and Flamengo took the trophy amid the usual chaotic scenes, with at least 100 people standing on the touchline as the game reached its conclusion.

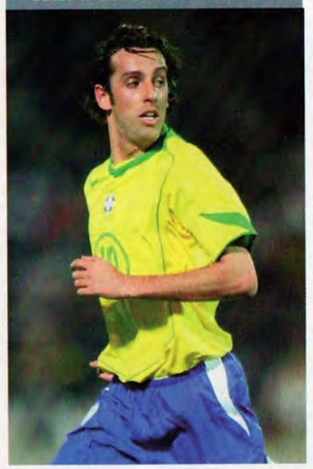
Flamengo's fickle supporters celebrated as if their team had won the Libertadores Cup, but the true value of the Carioca was quickly put into context as the national championship got under way the following week. Rio teams played 15 matches between them without winning before Fluminense finally broke their duck – by beating Vasco 1-0.

The fact that 80,000 people watched the Carioca Final was used by some commentators as evidence that the state championships still deserve a place in the Brazilian season. But in doing so, they overlooked the previous weeks of utter tedium in which the bigger clubs strolled through an endless procession of matches against the smaller teams in front of crowds that struggled to reach four figures.

The smaller clubs, incidentally, effectively hire teams for the competition, signing players on two or three-month contracts and then disbanding the side once the tournament has ended.

● Arsenal's Edu made his debut for Brazil in last month's friendly against Hungary in Budapest. It was the first time the midfielder – full name Eduardo Cesar Gaspar – had played for his country at any level. Several media reports in the UK confused him with Celta Vigo's Edu – full name Luis Eduardo Schmidt – who has appeared several times for the Olympic team, made his senior debut against Thailand a few years back, and was on the bench for the first 2002 World Cup qualifier, against Colombia in March 2000.

Called to the colours...Edu



Other state championships were little better than the Carioca. There was more violence as the Minas Gerais version produced the almost inevitable Atletico Mineiro-Cruzeiro Final. The first leg, won 3-1 by Brazilian champions Cruzeiro, was overshadowed by the death of a fan during clashes at a bus terminal before kick-off.

In response, the two sides took the field for the second leg wearing shirts with the word 'peace' emblazoned across the chest. But the game ended in a pitched battle after Atletico, who won 1-0 but lost 3-2 on aggregate, took exception to Cruzeiro's celebrations.

Atletico fans hurled a firecracker at Cruzeiro defender Cris, who hurled it back. Television pictures then showed Atletico goalkeeper Eduardo attacking the Cruzeiro player, and the two came to blows. Other players joined in, fans invaded the pitch and riot police joined the fray, resulting in a good 15 minutes of out-and-out brawling.

Things were more peaceful in the Paulista championship, perhaps too much so. Sao Paulo's opening match in the Libertadores Cup drew a bigger attendance than their first five matches combined in their appalling state tournament. This ended with unfashionable Sao Caetano demolishing even more unfashionable Jundiai Paulista 5-1 on aggregate after both legs were played at a half-empty Pacaembu stadium.

The tournament as a whole was a spectacular failure, not least because of the format: 21 teams (far too many), divided into two groups, with the top four in each going into the knockout stages.

And the Paulista's proposed solution for next year? To ask the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) to allocate more dates and make the competition longer. If that happens, Brazilian football will be taking a very large step backwards indeed.

After 30 years of humming and harring, the CBF took the plunge last season and set up a proper national championship in which the teams played each other twice and the one with the most points won the title. But there are already some cracks appearing. This year's edition has been crammed into eight months instead of nine to give an extra month to the state championships. That means that, in order to cram in 46 rounds of matches, the teams will be playing twice a week for most of the season, there will no longer be breaks on the weekends before international games, and the contest will plough on in July even when the Copa America is taking place.

Next year, the national championship will thankfully be reduced to 22 clubs from the current 24. Yet, instead of using this to give the calendar some breathing space, directors are already falling over themselves to fill in the spaces with more drivel.

'Vasco coach Geninho was caught on film instructing his players to kick the opposition'

The golden touch

Arsenal's French striker is set to end the season with a clutch of awards. Gavin Hamilton reports

EVERYTHING THIERRY HENRY touches seems to turn to gold at the moment. Despite Arsenal's failure once again to progress beyond the Champions League quarter-finals, Henry has enjoyed his best ever season.

After the goals, come the prizes. Along with accolades from his fellow professionals and the written press as their Footballer of the Year, Henry is the favourite to win the ESM Golden Shoe, the prize awarded to the continent's leading goalscorer.

Henry's goals spearheaded Arsenal's bid to become the first English team to go the entire League season unbeaten since Preston…in 1888-89. Such a feat has been matched in post-war western Europe only by Milan in 1992 and Ajax in 1995.

"This has been a special season for me and a great season for Arsenal," says Henry. "What I liked about this season is we overcame every obstacle. We played without Patrick [Vieira] earlier in the season, but we still managed to deliver on the pitch.

"People say we are a one- or two-man team, but I don't think that is fair. We are a big team as a group and that is why we are so happy playing together."

But Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger is in no doubt about Henry's importance to the side. "What Thierry has shown this season is incredible consistency," says Wenger. "He plays in nearly every game and on the few occasions I left him out, he was not happy. Thierry wants to play whenever he can and he has the winning mentality any top player needs. He also has a great passion for this club. He does not say he loves Arsenal just to keep people happy; he means it."

Credit to Wenger

Wenger can claim great credit for Henry's development into one of the world's top strikers. It was he who rescued Henry from a miserable time at Juventus and converted him from a winger to a central striker.

But even Wenger has been surprised by the progress made by Henry at Highbury. "His pace was there, I always saw that in him, but now he has added much more," he says. "I can see why so many managers wish they could have him, but that will not be allowed to happen.

"I have been told by the people in charge of Arsenal that it does not matter how much money may be offered, we will not sell our best players, and I believe that."

Henry is equally adamant that Roman Abramovich's petro-millions will not tempt him into a move across town to Chelsea. He says: "I have no reason to think about leaving Arsenal. It is nice when you hear teams like Real Madrid and Barcelona being linked with you, but we have all worked too hard here to throw this away now. I am happy with my life in London and love Arsenal. Most of all, I am very happy working with Arsene Wenger. I owe him so much. First, he signed me when I was having a difficult period in Italy, and then he stuck by me when I was finding my feet in the English game.

"He decided I could play as a striker, and even though I was not so sure myself, he has been proved right. What can I say – he is the man who has helped my career so much, both at the start and now."

Winning the ESM Golden Shoe would be confirmation, in the final days leading up to Euro 2004, of Henry's status as the world's leading player. For most of the season Henry has faced strong competition from two Brazilians – Ailton of Werder Bremen and Real Madrid's Ronaldo. But it is the spread of the Frenchman's League goals – against the likes of Manchester United and Chelsea as well as middle-ranking teams like Southampton and Aston Villa – that has set him apart from his rivals.

"This season saw me produce the best form of my career," says Henry, "and the fact that everyone at Arsenal believes in me helped me do this. The toughest problem is to stay at this level and this is my challenge in the next few years. There is more expectation on me now than ever before, but I like this challenge."

Wenger believes there is even more to come from Henry. "He can get better in the air and may even be able to improve his finishing," he says. "But he is a wonderful player now. I never believed he could be this good when I first saw him as a 17-year-old, but he always had something special."

ESM GOLDEN SHOE STANDINGS at May 9, 2004

POS	NAME	TEAM	GOALS	FACTOR	PTS
1	Thierry Henry	Arsenal (Eng)	29	2	58
2	Ailton	Werder Bremen (Ger)	27	2	54
3	Ronaldo	Real Madrid (Spa)	24	2	48
4	Roy Makaay	Bayern Munich (Ger)	23	2	46
	Andrii Shevchenko	Milan (Ita)	23	2	46
	Djibril Cisse	Auxerre (Fra)	23	2	46
7	Ara Hakopian	Banants Yerevan (Arm)	45	1	45
8	Alan Shearer	Newcastle (Eng)	22	2	44
9	Henrik Larsson	Celtic (Sco)	28	1.5	42
	Mateja Kezman	PSV (Hol)	28	1.5	42
11	Luigi Pieroni	Mouscron (Blg)	27	1.5	40.5
12	Martin Max	Hansa Rostock (Ger)	20	2	40
	Francesco Totti	Roma (Ita)	20	2	40
	Louis Saha	Fulham/Man Utd (Eng)	20	2	40
15	Tor Henning Hamre	Flora Tallinn (Est)	39	1	39
16	Ruud Van Nistelrooy	Manchester United (Eng)	19	2	38
	Mista	Valencia (Spa)	19	2	38
	Alberto Gilardino	Parma (Ita)	19	2	38
19	Zafer Biryol	Konyaspor (Tur)	25	1.5	37.5
	Roland Kollmann	Grazer AK (Aut)	25	1.5	37.5
21	Javier Chevanton	Lecce (Ita)	18	2	36
	Julio Baptista	Sevilla (Spa)	18	2	36
	Salva	Malaga (Spa)	18	2	36
	Mikael Forssell	Birmingham (Eng)	18	2	36
	Didier Drogba	Marseille (Fra)	18	2	36
	Viktors Dobrecovs	Metalurgs (Lat)	36	1	36
	Martin Kamburov	Lok Plovdiv (Bul)	24	1.5	36

FACT FILE

Club Arsenal (Eng)
Country France
Born August 17, 1977, in Les Ullis
Previous clubs Monaco, Juventus (Ita)
International debut October 1997, v South Africa
International caps 56 (25 goals)
Honours World Cup 1998; European Championship 2000; French League 1997; English League 2002, 2004; FA Cup 2002, 2003

EURO 2004
THE COACHES

In a special feature ahead of Euro 2004, we speak to the 16 national coaches involved. The pressure on them is intense: if history is any guide, few will be in the same job this time next year

MORE INFO

To read more about Euro 2004, the teams and the players taking part, don't miss our Summer special edition, on sale now, priced £3.75.

Bulgaria
Plamen MARKOV

Interview by Nick Bidwell

Confidence builder...Markov has helped restore the team's self-belief

What do you think of your team's group?
It's a very tricky group. Italy have many world-class players and have to be favourites. Sweden are very well-organised and solid, and we haven't beaten them for 30 years. As for Denmark, they got the better of us in the qualifying stages of the 2002 World Cup. We'll be the underdogs in every game and that may help us.

Who are your key players?
I will not be revealing any secrets when I point to Stilian Petrov in midfield and striker Dimitar Berbatov. Petrov is a very gifted creator and has done a good job as captain, while Berbatov is maturing into a top-class finisher. Fortunately, they are not the only talents I can call on.

Who will win the tournament?
The Czechs, France, Italy, Spain and England seem very capable. France would be my favourites. They could field three or four very competitive XIs and I don't see them repeating their under-par performances at the 2002 World Cup. A French win would please me. I have a great affection for their country and football after playing and coaching there for a few years.

Who will be the surprises?
Bulgaria, I hope.

What are your objectives for Euro 2004?
I'm not the sort to make bold predictions. I'd rather be a realist. We are only a small football nation and have not been at a finals tournament since France 98. We will do our best.

What are Bulgaria's strengths?
The many young and talented players within the squad. They can only get better and they have lots of desire to impose themselves on the international stage. Also important to us is the great spirit in the camp. There are no clans. Everybody has the same aim.

What was your first priority on taking over the Bulgarian side in December 2001?
The team had just lost 6-0 in Prague to the Czechs [in a World Cup qualifier] and obviously the most pressing matter was to rebuild confidence. A goalless draw in Croatia in my first game as head coach was a timely boost, and so was a home draw with Germany at the start of last season. Self-belief was restored and we were in much better shape for the Euro 2004 qualifiers.

How would you compare the present Bulgarian side with the one that played at the 1994 World Cup?
I don't think it's possible to compare teams from different times. In 1994, the Bulgarian side made history [they finished fourth, their best-ever placing]. We can only aspire to emulating such a great achievement.

Is it true that you take your players to the theatre before matches?
We like to prepare for a match by going to the theatre or cinema. It's a good way to bond and forget the pressures.

How are your relations with the media?
Criticism is inevitable. You can never please everyone. What's vital is to have the courage of your convictions.

Should clubs be paid when their players appear for national teams?
This is a political question I ought to avoid.

> 'There are no clans in our camp'

Croatia
Otto BARIC

Interview by Zdravko Reic

What is your biggest problem? Is it that you're missing a playmaker?
No. My biggest problem is journalists. You just keep blaming me for things. Sometimes I just think aloud, and you get wind of it and don't want to let go.

But you have to admit you say some amazing things, like when you said that a defender like Stjepan Tomas is going to keep up with Zinedine Zidane in the match against France?
I said that Zidane can be taken out of the game with one strict marker, a player who knows how to cope in one-on-one battles.

But that definitely is not Tomas; he's a butcher, a killer, he won't be able to track Zidane without fouling him.
That's what you say. Tomas is not a killer, he's an excellent defender.

Croatia have played a series of warm-up matches, but the starting XI does not seem clear.
I have it all in my mind. Don't worry. We are going to start the championship with a victory against Switzerland. That's going to be our foundation for a surprise. Especially if France and England draw.

Are Croatia more likely to surprise France or England?
I think the French are a more complete side, so it could be the English we surprise. We played a friendly with them [last August], and though we lost I saw we have the capacity to compete with them.

What's your biggest concern?
We lack quality in midfield, though I've been encouraged by Niko Kovac's performances. I'm also worried that we cannot use Igor Tudor against Switzerland [because of suspension].

That's why you asked Zvonimir Soldo to return from international retirement. And now you see Nenad Bjelica as a saviour.
Soldo is an excellent player, and despite being 37 he's a regular at Stuttgart. I spoke with him a few times, but he refused to return. Now journalists have overblown the importance of Nenad Bjelica. He's been playing well for Kaiserslautern, but does not have as much class as he would like.

Where do your team's strengths lie?
In attack. Dado Prso, Tomo Sokota, Ivan Klasnic, Ivica Olic and Ivica Mornar all have something to offer, and we have wingers like Dario Srna, Milan Rapajic and Marko Babic.

What can this team achieve?
Our key mission at these finals is to prepare for the World Cup qualifiers. We shouldn't fly on the wings of our brilliant result at France 98 [Croatia finished third]. Then we had a fantastic generation of players. That is not the case any more.

Which Croatian players are going to increase their value during the finals?
I'm sure Prso is going to confirm his status as one of the best forwards in Europe. I also hope Klasnic is going to get recognition. I'm sure three other young players are going to confirm their potential: Srna, Babic and Niko Kranjcar.

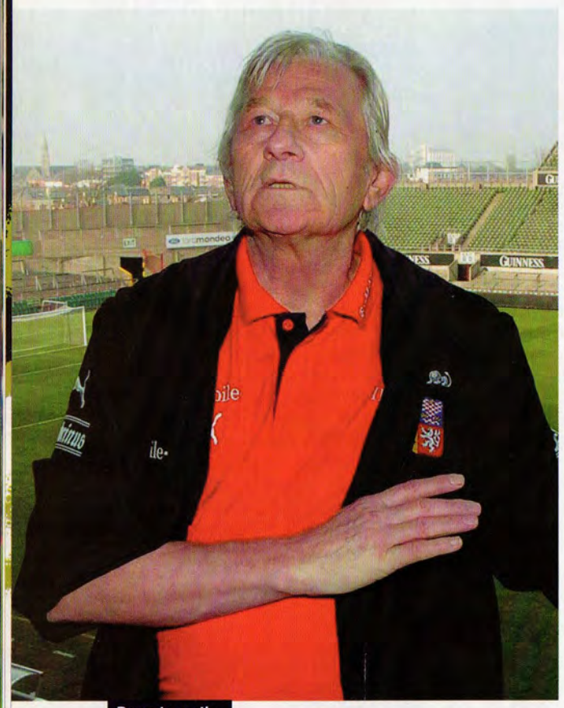
Who's going to win the tournament?
The French are favourites. I also believe the Spanish could go far, and the Portuguese might do something, because they are hosts.

> 'We will win our first game'

All in the mind... Baric is clear about his starting XI

Czech Republic
Karel BRUCKNER

Interview by Keir Radnedge



Down to earth ...Bruckner's approach has reaped rewards

'I don't have stars, I have human beings'

How highly do you rate the European Championship?

Simple, it's a summit of football. But qualifying results don't mean anything. We are all starting right back at the foot of the mountain again. I would say it's a kind of shop window in which all the players must concentrate as hard as possible. It starts with a league – but this is very different to a domestic championship. You can be finished here after three matches not 33.

Has the Champions League had an effect on national team football?

In the 10 years of the Champions League the infrastructure of European football has changed significantly. There's been both a commercial influence and a sporting impact. Frankly, I think the economic influence has been dominant, and that's not such a good thing. The Champions League is such a major competition that I consider it another 'super league' along with the championships in Spain, Italy, Germany and England's Premiership.

So is there still a place for national team football?

Of course, because it's a different game. National teams are a special unit. They are not so heavily influenced by the economic aspect. A national team, for example, is the only team for which you cannot buy players, unless you come from Qatar, of course. For a coach there is nothing to get in the way, like transfers, contracts and so on. The job is nothing like as fraught as it is for a club coach. It's more about the philosophy of football.

Which is the better job?

Both have their advantages. I was 30 years a club coach before I became manager of the Czech Under-21s and then the senior national team, so I can see what's good on both sides. It helps a club coach to have his players together all the time, whereas the national coach only sees them every few weeks. I certainly noticed a change of atmosphere when I left club coaching.

Who will win Euro 2004?

For everyone the minimum requirement is to get past the first round. I think the majority of teams have the same chances. I always like to talk about results in the past tense. Not the future. I am no friend of the word 'if'.

How do you rate your chances?

Right now, I am thinking about only one game and one team: Latvia. They are our first opponents so they are much more important than, say, Holland or Germany or whoever may come later. That's my approach to football: humility. Holland? Well, you might think we have got used to one another. But you always find out something new about your opponents. As for Germany, they are a team who struggle in the qualifying competition but then get to the finals – and usually win them. They are tough opponents.

What can we expect from your team?

We would like to continue developing the style we have created down the years – and not only in the 20-match unbeaten run we had until earlier this year. We rely on around 12 basic players and our recent friendly matches were the last tweaking of the style. Mind you, friendly matches will soon be history. When UEFA and FIFA decided to have seven-team groups in the European qualifying section for 2006 they forgot there weren't enough competition dates. So much for the international calendar. We are struggling to find enough dates for competitive matches, let alone friendlies.

Who will be the stars of Euro 2004?

You know one player in Europe I really admire? It's Didier Drogba of Marseille. But fortunately he can't play in the Euro finals because he is African. I have been impressed by Thierry Henry and I could mention many other players but it's not my way. Our attitude is about the collective – we don't think about individuals. I don't have stars, I have human beings.

Are Pavel Nedved and his like 'mere' players to you?

The likes of Nedved, Milan Baros and Tomas Rosicky are talented players but they do not hesitate to put their ability to the service of the team. Our team spirit is brilliant. I am impressed by my players' attitude. In fact, it impresses me more than our results. Not once in the last two years has any player come to ask for a break from the national team before a friendly. That tells you something about us.

Which coaches have influenced you?

I don't study any particular coaches, I draw my ideas from everywhere, everything and everybody. For instance, I get ideas from watching a boys' match or training session.

And your boyhood inspirations?

Honestly, I didn't have any role models when I was a child – either players or clubs. I grew up in a little village when all we had was a bicycle, a ball and…poverty. That was the motivating influence for me.

Denmark
Morten OLSEN

Interview by Jim Holden

What do you think of your team's group?

It's a tough group. In the European Championship all the groups are tough. It is more difficult than the World Cup because the standards are higher overall in Europe. I believe Italy are one of the favourites for the whole tournament, while Bulgaria, Sweden and ourselves all won our qualifying groups. So that makes it difficult. None of us needed to come through the play-offs. In these tournaments so much depends on the form of the day. You have to be lucky with injuries too.

Who are your key players?

The team, always the team. We have a fine team, and if we try to stand or fall with one player it would be no good for us. We have quality, but Denmark is not a big country, and we do have a problem if three or four players are out.

Who will win the tournament?

I think France are the best team. They play good football, the way I like it to be played. If such a team can win the championship I think it would be good for the game generally.

Who will be the surprises?

I hope it's Denmark. I think it's difficult to say, but Portugal are also a team who could win because they are playing at home. They have some marvellous players.

How would you describe your relations with the media?

Of course, you have to speak to the media. It's OK in Denmark. We have a good spirit between the players and the media. We have a free style and everyone can speak with each other. There is no problem.

Should clubs be paid when players appear for their countries?

Probably, yes. But, of course, the big question is how much. Finding an answer to that would be very difficult. I know people are talking about it, and I'm glad I don't have to be the one who makes such a decision.

What did you learn from the last World Cup?

Of course, you learn many small things. I certainly learned how to prepare a team to play in 40°C. Looking back that was very difficult for the European teams in Korea and Japan. What I am very pleased about is that nearly all the players are still in the team now. They have the experience of a major tournament together and I think that could be to our benefit. They have learned things together, but I shall not say exactly what.

Which match has given you most pleasure so far during your time as Denmark coach?

It's very important to qualify for something. So the matches that take you to a tournament are significant. If I must pick one it is probably the 2-0 win against France at the World Cup. That took us through to the next stage, it was a surprise, and it meant we won the group. That was very nice for everybody.

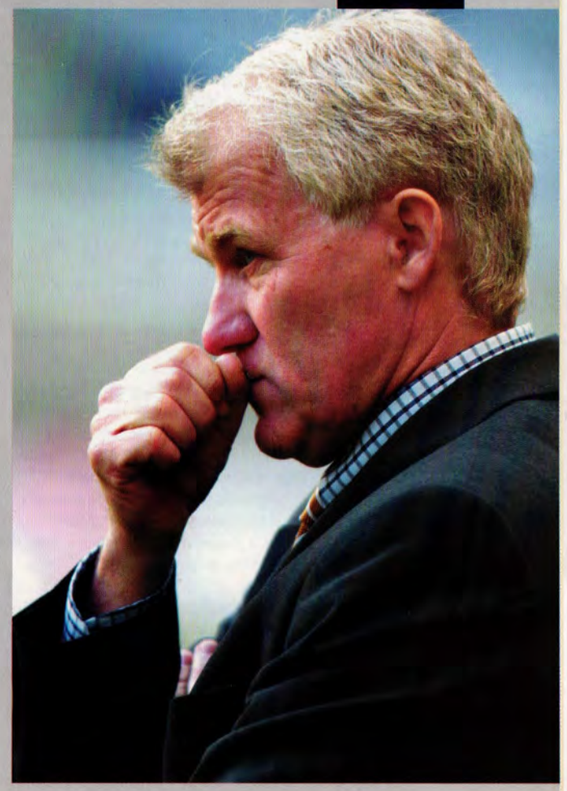
You have been critical of standards in the Danish Superliga. Why?

I have said that we could be technically better. It is important to keep improving the standard of play. Every country is improving, and Denmark must as well. I think it is very encouraging that the crowds are getting much bigger in the Superliga and that the interest in the game in Denmark is growing. I would like to see good technique, the kind shown by Claus Jensen and Jesper Gronkjaer, for example. We have qualified for five major finals in succession, and that shows we are doing many things right. But we must keep on improving. That's why I speak up.

What do you think of the new Scandinavian Royal League?

It will be very interesting to see football played in the winter in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and whether the fans come to see the games. It has not been part of our football culture, but it is a fine experiment. The climate has always been against it, and I guess many of the matches will be played on artificial grass. That will also be interesting to see. There are already some pitches in Sweden and there is talk of artificial grass coming to Denmark too. It is a great surface for training. Personally, I always liked to play on natural grass, but all over Europe they are having problems growing grass, even in some of the most famous stadiums. It will be interesting.

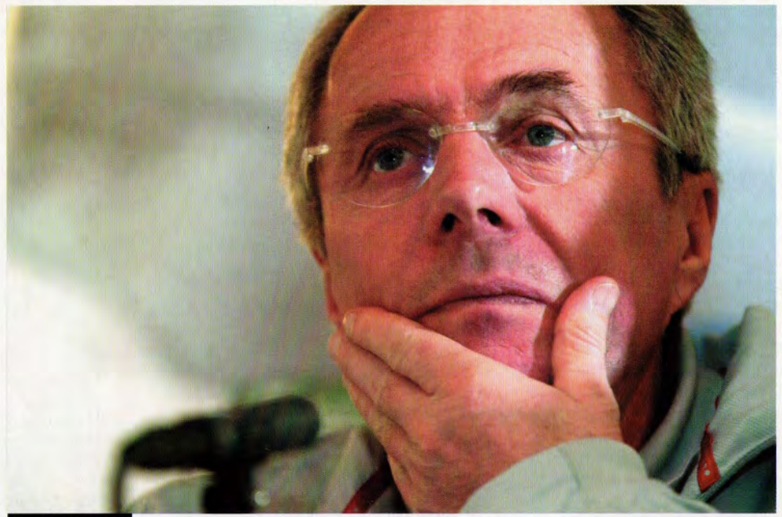
Quality control... Olsen worries about the Danish Superliga



'We have a problem if three or four players are out'

England
Sven Goran ERIKSSON

Interview by Jim Holden



Food for thought ...Eriksson is a strong advocate of a winter break

What do you think of your team's group?
It is very interesting. I think our first match, against France, will be one of the highlights of the overall group stage. They have some fantastic players and know what it takes to win tournaments. We will also not be taking Switzerland and Croatia lightly – the Swiss have made huge progress in recent years and Croatia always produce talented teams. However, if we have all our key players fit we shouldn't fear anyone.

Who are your key players?
I don't like to pick out individuals but I think when you look at the World Cup two years ago you can say that we are a much better team with David Beckham, Steven Gerrard and Michael Owen fully fit.

Who will win the tournament?
France, Italy and Portugal must be among the favourites, with Germany always a danger in big tournaments. And why not England?

Who will be the surprises?
I don't know whether this counts as a surprise, but the Czech Republic will be very difficult to beat, even in a tough group with Germany and Holland.

How would you describe your relations with the media?
Being the England manager is a big job, a huge honour, and relations with the media are a major part of that job.

Should clubs be paid when their players appear for their country?
This is not a question I can answer, it's a matter for FIFA and the national associations.

How important is a winter break to English football?
A winter break would help the players, the clubs and the national team. It is a very long season in England and players will inevitably get tired towards the end. As this is the time when major championships are played, of course I would like to see them more refreshed, and a break would certainly help in this regard.

You've now had more than three years as England head coach. What aspect of English football has struck you most?
I have watched a lot of matches around the country in that time but even now I am constantly amazed at the passion for football in England and the incredible atmosphere in the stadiums.

What lessons did you learn from the 2002 World Cup campaign that will affect your approach to this tournament in Portugal?
It was partly the experience at the World Cup that has made me argue for a winter break. We went into the tournament with key players either injured, not fully fit or exhausted after a long season. It is very difficult for England to win a major championship under these circumstances.

Would you support a regulation that forced top Premiership clubs to play more England-qualified players in their teams?
Of course, as England coach I want to see as many top-quality English players playing at the highest level. However, I am not sure that an artificial quota is the way to achieve that. What is important is that the youth development structure continues to produce excellent young players as we have seen over the past few years.

There has been much speculation that you may return to club football after Euro 2004. What is the situation from your point of view?
I have made it clear that I have a contract as England coach until 2008. I have nothing further to add on this subject.

Were you disappointed that Alan Shearer decided he did not want to return to international football?
It was Alan's decision to retire from the national team and I fully respect that.

Which England match has given you the most pleasure so far?
While the 5-1 win in Munich is obviously a highlight, I was also very proud of the team's attitude and performance in the 0-0 draw with Turkey in Istanbul in what was a crucial match to qualify for Euro 2004. They remained focused despite a lot of distractions and played extremely well.

What was the most difficult moment of your time with England so far?
The build-up to the match in Turkey was very difficult for everyone – the players, the FA, and for me personally – with the background of the Rio Ferdinand situation.

> 'It's very difficult to win with exhausted players'

France
Jacques SANTINI

Interview by Nick Bidwell

What do you think of your team's group?
I'd call it a very balanced group. Sven Goran Eriksson has to be congratulated for the work he has done with England and it's worth noting that his team came close to knocking out Brazil in the quarter-finals of World Cup 2002. We have to take Switzerland and Croatia very seriously too. As our neighbours, the Swiss will be specially motivated to do well against us, and the Croats are full of individual talent. There will be no room for any complacency on our part. We'll have to be at our best to finish in the first two places.

Who will win the tournament?
I believe there are a lot of teams with legitimate ambitions to win. Italy, England and Holland come into this category. But I'm particularly thinking of Portugal. Playing at home is a big advantage, and for players like Figo, Rui Costa and Fernando Couto this is their last chance for success. What's more, like us, they will be out to make up for a poor 2002 World Cup.

And France?
We are going to Portugal to win. Since the disappointment of the last World Cup, the players have bounced back well both individually and collectively. Not only did we win all our eight qualifiers, which is not easy, but we've also looked the part in warm-up games against Germany [3-0], Belgium [2-0] and Holland [0-0].

Who will be the surprises?
The Nordic countries, Denmark and Sweden. Both are well-drilled teams and have some good individuals.

Who are your key players?
All 23 players in the squad will have an important part to play. Substitutes will come off the bench to do a job and I may have to make changes because of lack of form or freshness. The whole squad will be involved.

Is Thierry Henry the best striker in the world?
At the moment, there's no question about it. I was disappointed that he wasn't crowned European Footballer of the Year. He's the most complete forward in the world today. He scores, he creates, he's very active. I'm just glad he's French.

> 'World Cup wounds have healed but the scars remain'

France are favourites to successfully defend their European title. How do you deal with such pressure?
It's something I've grown up with. I've always been ambitious and since I was a teenager at Saint-Etienne, I've been obliged to win titles. It's important to be oneself and to accept that defeat is part of a sportsman's life.

Your captain, Marcel Desailly, has not played frequently for Chelsea this season. Is that a worry?
No. Because every time I've played him in the French team this season, he's been up to the mark. The same applied to Fabien Barthez when he was not playing for Manchester United. He has always been good for us.

Do you think France will be less complacent and more determined following the anti-climax of the last World Cup?
We'll approach Euro 2004 with a lot of humility and concentration. The players were severely criticised after the 2002 World Cup and the ones who are still with us haven't forgotten. The wounds have healed but the scars remain.

How are your relations with the media?
This is a results-driven business. Since the results have been generally good since I took over, I haven't been criticised too much. Journalists have been professional in their dealings with me. For instance, I've not had the personal attacks that former France coach Aime Jacquet had to endure.

Should clubs be paid when their players appear for national teams?
I'd like to take part in this debate. But as usual, coaches and players are kept out of the decision-making process. Those in charge of the federations and clubs will discuss it among themselves, and it's up to them to make the decision.

Making a point... Santini's priority is to help France retain their title

Despite losing only one match out of 21, you have not yet been offered a new contract by the French federation. How do you react to that?
The federation is my employer. If it decides not to renew or discuss, that is its right. It had been agreed we would discuss a new contract as soon as qualification for Euro 2004 was secured but it has not happened and it has put me out a little. Having said that, my only priority now is Euro 2004.

Do you think you will still be in charge next August?
Wait and see.

Germany
Rudi VOLLER

Interview by Nick Bidwell

What do you think of your team's group?
No question that we're in an unbelievably difficult group. It could have been a lot easier. Holland and the Czech Republic are super teams, and Latvia did not qualify by accident. We will have to be on top of our game and totally focused from the first minute of our opening match, against the Dutch.

Who are your key players?
As in the 2002 World Cup, the leaders of the team will be Oliver Kahn and Michael Ballack. They both had exceptional tournaments in the Far East and I hope they set the same example this time. Jens Nowotny and Christian Worns in central defence have a lot of influence as well.

Who will win the tournament?
France are an outstanding side, and after their disappointing World Cup I expect them to come to the fore again. Apart from them, Italy and hosts Portugal are the favourites.

Who will be the surprises?
Having played for Otto Rehhagel at Werder Bremen, I would like to think his Greece side could cause an upset. It was quite an achievement for them to qualify ahead of a big football nation like Spain.

How would you describe your relations with the media?
There have been highs and lows. At times the media has been very critical of the team and myself. Sometimes it's justified, sometimes it's not. You have to live with it.

Qualification for Euro 2004 was not plain sailing. Why?
I'm not one to make excuses. But it's a fact that we had a number of key players out injured during the qualifiers. The line-up had to be changed frequently and that's always a major problem. With Didi Hamann, Torsten Frings and Jens Nowotny back for the finals, we will have a much more stable unit.

Once Germany were considered automatic favourites for a tournament. But no longer. How do you feel about that?
Clearly nations such as France, Italy and Holland will be tipped more than us. But I don't want to hear talk of certain defeat. We aim to play to our strengths and not concern ourselves with the opposition. I'm optimistic.

Which is Michael Ballack's best position?
It doesn't matter. The important thing is that he is often in the opposition box, where he can put his goalscoring ability to good use.

How do you rate the youngsters you have brought in in recent seasons?
We have a good crop coming through. I'm delighted with the development of young players like Kevin Kuranyi, Andreas Hinkel, Philipp Lahm, Paul Freier and others. They have successfully made the big leap from club to international football.

What is your recipe for a good Euro 2004 for Germany?
Unlike some of our recent performances, we need everyone in the team to play to their full potential, to give that bit extra. I hope we can play with the same togetherness that we showed at the last World Cup.

> 'We aim to play to our strengths'

United we stand... Voller is looking for team togetherness

Greece
Otto REHHAGEL

Interview by Kicker magazine

Right of entry... Rehhagel believes his side belong on the biggest stage

What do you think of your team's group?
Alongside Portugal, Spain and Russia, we have to be the outsiders. But even outsiders sometimes have their day. We know Portugal and Spain well. Of course, we met Spain in the qualifiers, and drew 1-1 in Portugal in November.

How do you feel about Greece playing in the opening game of Euro 2004, against the hosts, Portugal?
It's a marvellous opportunity for my lads, a nice addition to their CVs. We have the chance to show the whole of Europe what we're capable of, to prove that we deserve to be in these finals. We don't intend to go into the match as victims. What we must remember is that superstars like Rui Costa and Luis Figo only have two legs like us and don't have eyes in their backside.

> 'Rui Costa and Figo only have two legs'

Who are your key players?
Vassilis Tsiartas for his creativity, Stelios Giannakopoulos for his incisiveness, Angelos Haristeas for his goalscoring ability.

Who will win the tournament?
With home advantage, Portugal will be hard to beat. My other favourites would be Holland, Italy, France and the Czech Republic.

Who will be the surprises?
I think Denmark will cause problems to whoever they meet. Jon Dahl Tomasson is an intelligent player and outstanding goalscorer, and wingers Dennis Rommedahl and Martin Jorgensen are hard to control.

And your home nation, Germany?
When Rudi Voller has all his best players available, Germany have a chance to beat Holland and the Czech Republic. However, everything has to be right on the day.

How satisfying was Greece's qualification for Euro 2004?
I've had a lot of success in German club football with Fortuna Dusseldorf, Werder Bremen and Kaiserslautern. But reaching the European finals with Greece ranks up there with all those titles. What Greece have achieved is nothing short of sensational. I'm proud to have helped Greece reach their first European finals since 1980.

Did you despair when Greece lost their first two qualifiers, to Spain and Ukraine?
Far from it. A qualifying campaign is a long-distance race, not a sprint. We were just slow out of the blocks. I knew there was time for us to recover.

What did you bring to the Greek team?
The Greeks play technically-accomplished football but there was not enough discipline or togetherness. I also set about changing the way the team was regarded. It used to be the case that only the clubs mattered here. I convinced the players they would benefit if Greece returned to centre-stage.

What is your objective at Euro 2004?
Above all, we want to show we can compete at this level. We have nothing to lose, and the only thing I ask is that we keep the standards we set in the qualifiers.

You will be 66 later this summer. Is this your last coaching job?
When I leave this post, I will certainly be willing to accept further challenges. I'm still fully motivated, healthy and fit. There's no such thing as a young or old coach. Only successful or not-so-successful ones.

Holland
Dick ADVOCAAT

Interview by Klaas-Jan Droppert

What do you think of the team's group?
It's an interesting draw. Holland have finally got the opportunity to take revenge on the Czech Republic, and should manage to. Germany always perform well in tournaments and are among the best in Europe. And Latvia shouldn't be underestimated. They haven't qualified for nothing. It's going to be a tough job in the first round.

What are your chances of qualifying from the group?
Our goal is to at least reach the quarter-finals. From then on, who knows what will happen. Our high FIFA ranking justifies this ambition.

Who are your key players?
In a team every player is important. Even those who aren't in the starting line-up are playing a crucial role. During a tournament every player gets the chance to distinguish himself. A combination of talent, experience and mentality decides the strength of a team.

Who will win the tournament?
That's difficult to say. I hope that we play well and lift the trophy.

Who will be the surprises?
That's something we can only discover during the tournament. There are a few at every European Championship or World Cup.

> 'Our group is a tough job'

How would you describe your relations with the media?
The media are very important. They decide how the public will judge a football performance. They are the connection between the team and millions of people. I always take my relations with the media very seriously.

Should clubs be paid when their players appear for their country?
Clubs in Holland already receive payment for players selected for the national team.

When Euro 2004 has finished a number of players will say goodbye to the national team. Will the tournament also be used as a stage for players to gain experience for the World Cup qualifiers?
A coach should always use his best players. We will focus on Euro 2004 first. World Cup qualification will follow, and then the best players will play as well.

You were national coach at the 1994 World Cup. Will that experience be of use to you at Euro 2004?
Every tournament is different, even matches are incomparable. Since 1994 a lot has changed in football.

In focus...Advocaat will not use Euro 2004 as a testing ground for the next World Cup

Italy
Giovanni TRAPATTONI

Interview by Paddy Agnew

Bitter memories ...Trap wants to make up for the 2002 World Cup

What do you make of Italy's draw at Euro 2004?

For us, it was important to avoid France and Portugal since they both start with an important psychological advantage – France are the reigning champions, while Portugal are the home team. We start with Denmark and then Sweden, two northern European teams that are always very, very competitive, mentally and physically. In the past, we've often struggled against Sweden, against their athletic game. As for Bulgaria, they are perhaps not as athletically strong as Denmark and Sweden but they have players with terrific technique and temperament.

> 'I have a huge urge to prove I can do well with Italy at a tournament'

Denmark coach Morten Olsen has said Italy have to start as favourites in the group. Do you agree?

I have already said it and I repeat it now that we are among the favourites for the title but only if we arrive at the opening game in Portugal with our players in good condition. Remember, we had problems at the last World Cup because key players were either out through injury or were carrying injuries. Of course, we want to win the title, that's obvious. Then, too, I have a huge urge to prove that I can do well with Italy in a finals tournament. After the disappointment of the World Cup, I'd really like to make up for that and do well this time.

Who are your key players?

Francesco Totti is very important for us. He has been getting better for a couple of seasons now. Remember even Pele wasn't able to lead his side as a 23-year-old. It is experience and maturity that helps you make the grade. Nowadays, Totti is doing the same splendid things he always did, the only difference is that he is much more consistent now. He is a player who can make the difference and who knows how to adjust his game, according to the situation and the opponent. I just hope that he gets to Euro 2004 in good condition.

Many commentators would say Christian Vieri is another key player. Yet he has hardly had a happy season with Inter. Could this be a problem?

Everybody has their own personality and Vieri has his. The important things, though, happen on the pitch, and on the pitch no one ever complains about Vieri. If he plays for us as he has played for Italy in the past, then I'll be happy.

What is the basic tactical line-up of your Italy?

You can read it as you like. In the Italian League, there are basically three systems – the classic 4-4-2, the 4-3-3 often used by Juventus and the 4-2-3-1 as used by Roma last season. What is sure is that my line-up will be an attacking one since the two wide midfielders are attacking players.

Who will win the tournament?

It is very open…France, England, Holland, Spain, the Czech Republic, Germany are all strong sides.

Who will be the surprises?

Maybe Greece since they are fast and play well. But you'll just have to wait and see. The last World Cup showed that a lot depends on the physical and mental condition of the favourites when they arrive at a tournament.

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Latvia
Aleksandrs STARKOVS

Interview by Nick Bidwell

What do you think of your team's group?

We face three very strong teams. It will be very difficult for us.

Most people would say Latvia have no chance in Group D. What would you say?

That the Dutch, Czechs and Germans have their weaknesses. We've studied them closely and think we can exploit certain failings. In football, the big teams do not always win. No team is unbeatable. It gives us hope.

Who are your key players?

I wouldn't like to single out anyone in particular. What we have achieved has been through the work of the team as a whole. This Latvian squad is very close, very harmonious. It's a family.

Who will win the tournament?

Our first-round group opponents are all possible winners. So are the likes of France, Italy and Spain.

> 'No team is unbeatable'

Who will be the surprises?

Maybe Bulgaria, who have many good attackers.

How are your relations with the media?

Both the players and myself are being treated very well by the press at the moment. We've had to get used to the spotlight really being on us.

Should clubs be paid when their players appear for their country?

No. Pride is more important.

Was qualifying for Euro 2004 a total surprise?

It was for everybody. To begin with, we set out only to do ourselves justice but as we picked up more and more points, we became more confident and hungry for more.

Shock and awe... Starkovs believes his team can spring a surprise

Is it a plus that a large majority of the Latvian squad play or have played for Skonto Riga, the club you coached for 12 years?

Of course. Many of our team have played together for years and obviously that makes for a special understanding. What's more, all the ex- and present Skonto players know me and my methods well and know exactly what I'm looking for.

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Portugal
Luiz Felipe SCOLARI

Interview by Keir Radnedge

What do you think of your team's group?
Spain will be interesting. But they're our last match. Maybe by then it won't matter how it turns out. That's not to underestimate Greece and Russia, of course.

Who are your key players?
I want all my players to be key players. I don't want anyone to hide. I want Luis Figo playing the way he plays at his best for Real Madrid. Same for Rui Costa with Milan. I want them to be competitive: like Deco, like Costinha.

Who will win Euro 2004?
Any one of 10 countries. Maybe France or Spain or Italy or Germany or whoever. As for Portugal, we will respect all our opponents but we won't be afraid of any of them.

Who will be the surprises?
Any one of the other six, maybe!

How would you describe your relations with the media?
I have friends who are journalists but we leave our professional work outside the door. You cannot have friends who are journalists at the same time. Times have changed. What they write doesn't affect me. For example, if I had had to play a more pragmatic style of football to win the World Cup then that's what I would have done, whether the media liked it or not.

Should clubs be paid when their players appear for their country?
We have a system that's worked well for a long time. It doesn't mean it cannot be changed. But it's not my biggest concern right now.

> 'We won't fear anyone'

Competitive edge... Scolari values Deco and Costinha highly

Russia
Georgi YARTSEV

Interview by Victor Gusev

Limited choice... Yartsev rues his restricted player pool

What do you think of your team's group?
We've not been lucky. Portugal are the hosts, Spain are the hosts' neighbours. In fact those two and Greece are all from southern Europe and, unlike us, are used to playing in warm weather. I would say our group is probably the most difficult.

Who are your key players?
I have experienced players in each department. The choice of midfielders is not bad. In attack we have a number of talented young strikers. The situation is not so good in defence. Our clubs use mostly foreigners as wing-backs and full-backs, which creates a problem for the national team. Our future in the tournament will depend on whether our experienced players can find their best form or not, and on how fast the younger ones can assimilate.

> 'Our group is probably hardest'

If you do not win the tournament, who will?
It very hard to say. European tournaments are always more even than World Cups, so anything may happen. Portugal have a very good chance; so do France.

Who will be the surprises?
Much will depend on how fast this or that team adjust to difficult climatic conditions. You have to be strong to win in Portugal. There are so many up-and-coming young players, so it is impossible to predict who will be the biggest surprise.

How would you describe your relations with the media?
Normal. I know the job, because I was a TV commentator myself. At the start of the 1990s I used a break in my coaching career to work for Russian TV, and even went to the 1994 World Cup as a commentator. What bothers me is that sometimes critical analysis is baseless and even rude. It affects our younger players.

Should clubs be paid when their players appear for their country?
Playing for my country was always a matter of pride for me. But this is not a question for me. I'm not in charge of the finances. You'd better ask the people from our Football Union.

Do you expect any tactical innovations at Euro 2004?
Not really. With all the League games we see now from all over Europe, as well as Champions League, UEFA Cup and international matches, nothing can be hidden.

Do you have experience of anything like the forthcoming tournament?
No, this is my first coaching experience at such a level. Unfortunately, I do not have the choice of players enjoyed by my predecessors in charge of the Soviet Union team. They could call on the best players not only from Russia but also Ukraine, Georgia and the other USSR republics. I can only dream of such an opportunity now.

Spain
Inaki SAEZ

Interview by Sid Lowe

Back-four man...Saez insists on a defensive quartet despite problems at left-back

What do you think of Spain's group?
It's very equal and will be very competitive – I'd say we are all fairly similar. Of course I'd like us to get to our last game, against Portugal, with things sorted out, but you can't approach the tournament like that. The first game is vital, and not just because of the points on offer: it's also vital in terms of morale – it's a way of proving you are good enough, to yourself, as much as anything else.

Who are your key players?
I really don't want to single anyone out. My aim ever since I came into this job has been to create a team, to make us function as a unit. Look at Valencia: they have just won the League because they are an exceptional team.

Who will win the tournament?
It's difficult to pick a favourite. Some teams, in theory, have a better chance than others – Portugal as hosts, France as holders. Then there are the teams that are always there – Germany, England, Italy.

Who will be the surprises?
This is what I mean when I say you can't really talk about favourites, because I was about to mention the Czech Republic and Denmark. They may not have big names but they're excellent teams, good units.

How would you describe your relations with the media?
I came up from managing Spain's youngsters and I've really had to work at convincing the media that I was the right man for this job. I think I'm getting somewhere. I must be: after all, I used to be Inaki Saez the good guy; now I'm Inaki Saez the national team coach. The play-off with Norway was helpful: we came out of that stronger, and so did I. After that, the press saw me a bit more as a man who could pick the right players and the right system.

Should clubs be paid when players appear for their country?
That's something I don't get involved with. I'm a coach.

Why do Spain always fail at major finals?
One of the biggest difficulties is that we finish the season just before the major tournaments and barely have time to work together; our players are very tired.

What about the other theories... a lack of Spanish patriotism, the dominance of club football?
Well, there are certainly plenty of theories. One of the most important factors is that Spain is a buying country. We have a lot of foreigners playing in our League, and that can make finding Spanish players harder. For example, I'm looking for a left-back. At Barcelona, it's Van Bronckhorst [Dutch]; at Madrid, it's Roberto Carlos [Brazilian]; at Valencia, Carboni [Italian]. The flip side is shown by France and Brazil – they have a lot of players abroad and when they come back to play for the national team it's a chance to show their home fans that they're still playing great football.

What are Spain's big strengths?
We certainly have the talent, so what I have been trying to do is make us a unit. I'd like to think that our strength will be that compactness. We need to control the play and dominate possession; that's my aim. People talk about our system, saying it will never change. That's not quite true. It's 4-2-3-1 but it is variable. One of the two central midfielders can push further forward, for example, or the central one of that attacking line of three can join the striker.

> 'My aim has always been to make us function as a unit'

And what is the weak spot?
Left-back. I'd like a young left-footer there. Carles Puyol [adapted from the centre or the right] is a sure, competitive player who always transmits great confidence to his team-mates. But he's not 100 per cent ideal in that position.

Couldn't you play three at the back?
No, I think the line of four is very important because it gives protection to the wingers. Wing-backs are fine but they can end up being extra defenders. And I say this as someone who pioneered the wing-back role!

Bizarrely, considering the attacking quality, a lack of goals is also a problem.
We create a lot of chances but don't score enough goals. During qualifying, we had something like 28 shots against Northern Ireland and 32 against Norway in Valencia. I moaned a bit at the time that we didn't have a natural No 9, and suddenly they started popping up everywhere, scoring loads of goals for their clubs – Morientes, Salva, Fernando Torres, Mista. It was a nice headache.

Raul and Valeron don't look completely happy together; they both try to drop off the front.
Yes, Raul is much happier as a deep striker, because he sees the game very well. Valeron too. I've been trying out partnerships. The two forwards need to complement each other. I've looked at Raul and Valeron, Raul and Morientes, Valeron and Fernando Torres. One has to have skills that the other doesn't. In any case you can't play every game at this level with so few days between them. So we will rotate at the finals.

The problem is the press will slaughter you if Raul and Valeron don't both play.
Well, everyone has their tastes. And there has been a campaign against Raul recently, too. But in the end it's always the same: if you win, great. If you lose, you're in trouble.

Sweden
Lars LAGERBACK & Tommy SODERBERG

Interview by Gavin Hamilton

Double act...but Soderberg (right) will say farewell to Lagerback after the tournament

What do you think of your team's group?
It's very tight, with Italy a little bit ahead of the other three teams. Italy have a lot of individual skills but at the same time they're a very tactical team who always play for a result. Denmark have many good players with leading clubs in top leagues. Bulgaria have a new team with some very good players like Petrov and Berbatov.

Who are your key players?
Everybody. Because we are a small football country and we need all our players to be key players. It is a team sport, after all. But of course it's important that our best players like Ljungberg, Larsson and Mellberg can perform at 100 per cent.

Who will win the tournament?
France.

Who will be the surprises?
Almost every team could surprise. At least 10 have a realistic chance to win the tournament.

How would you describe your relations with the media?
OK, it's under control!

Should clubs be paid when their players appear for their country?
Good question, but in my opinion no. If the associations had to pay, only the big countries could afford to have their best players in the national team.

How much difference will Henrik Larsson's return make?
You can't measure it in figures, but of course it will be very positive for us, both on and off the pitch.

Were you always confident that you could persuade him to change his mind and return?
We didn't persuade him. When someone like Henrik says he is not 100 per cent motivated you shouldn't try to persuade him. Motivation must come from the person himself. But we maintained a dialogue with Henrik and told him the door was open. We always had hope.

Are you surprised that more teams do not have co-coaches?
No, because football is a bit conservative and traditional. And behind all good coaches you find a good team of leaders.

To Lars: Will anything be different when Tommy steps down after Euro 2004?
I hope not. My intention is to keep working with Roland Andersson [a former Sweden defender now on the coaching staff] in the way Tommy and I have always worked.

> 'We kept the door open for Larsson to return'

Switzerland
Kobi KUHN

Interview by Nick Bidwell

> 'The opener against Croatia is our game of the year'

What do you think of your team's group?
Against teams of the calibre of France, England and Croatia, we will certainly be tested. France are full of world-class players, England are always dangerous and Croatia are technically strong. We have a tough task ahead but not an impossible one.

Does your opening match with Croatia hold the key?
Very much. It's our good fortune that we start against Croatia and not France or England. If we begin with a win, we will have a solid platform to build on. It is our game of the year.

Who will win the tournament?
Big football nations like France, Italy and Spain look good. Probably the French will be the team to beat. We lost to them in Geneva at the start of the season and they gave a wonderful display.

Who will be the surprises?
I was impressed by the Greeks when we lost to them in a warm-up game. I wouldn't underestimate them. Their German coach Otto Rehhagel is a great organiser and he has some very skilful, quick players.

Who are your key players?
I prefer to put the emphasis on the team unit. We have talented individuals but everyone has to show the right tactical discipline and spirit.

How are your relations with the media?
Normal. While there has been a lot of euphoria in the country at large, the media have not built up expectations so we do not feel under excessive pressure.

Several of your first-choice players are injured or starting sporadically for their clubs. How much is this a worry?
It is not the best of situations but I'm not panicking. All I can do is hope that the players get the match practice they need or recover in time for the big day.

In which areas do the Swiss team need to improve?
At times we give the ball away too easily. We must be more precise in our passing and look to control the game better.

What makes you optimistic of a good tournament?
I have a team with lots of belief and desire. We do not go to Portugal as tourists. I'm proud of the spirit of my lads. They don't let their heads drop.

Getting a lift...Kuhn is looking to Swiss team spirit to carry them through

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Question of face...Morientes set tongues wagging by upstaging his Bernabeu team-mates

Are you watching, Real?

Fernando Morientes, the on-loan striker whose goals knocked out his Madrid team-mates, is on the verge of joining an exclusive European club. Keir Radnedge reports

FERNANDO MORIENTES will be up there alongside Real Madrid's legends if Monaco beat Porto in the Arena AufSchalke in Gelsenkirchen to win the European Cup.

Of the individual winners of European club football's greatest prize, very few trump the former Zaragoza forward, on loan to Monaco from the Bernabeu. Madrid's Paco Gento won it six times, Alfredo Di Stefano and Jose Maria Zarraga five apiece, Jose Hector Rial and Marquitos four each. Liverpool's Phil Neal picked up four, as did Milan's veteran captain Paolo Maldini.

Victory on May 26 will allow Morientes to join the 'four' club and go clear of Madrid team-mates such as Roberto Carlos and Raul.

He is also determined – a feeling perhaps enhanced by his treatment by Madrid – to prove he is a winner. "Three Champions League wins could be a good omen for a fourth," he says. "It will be the last match of our season and we'll do everything not to let the chance pass us by. Nobody remembers the runners-up. In a Final all that matters is who won. That's what we have to drill into our heads."

A great favourite in the Bernabeu dressing-room and with the Madrid fans, Morientes was increasingly marginalised following the arrival of Ronaldo from Internazionale after the 2002 World Cup. He was then farmed out to Monaco just before last summer's transfer deadline.

The forward has already taken some measure of revenge by helping knock out Madrid in the Champions League quarter-finals, scoring in both legs. He is the competition's leading scorer with nine goals, his latest after striding through Chelsea's defence to crack the equaliser at Stamford Bridge in the semi-final return.

The future beyond Gelsenkirchen is uncertain. Madrid president Florentino Perez wants Morientes back, but that is unlikely to be as a replacement for Ronaldo. It is more likely Madrid will use 'Moro' as bait in their bid to land players such as Roma defender Walter Samuel and/or midfielder Emerson.

On the other hand, Monaco's executive president Pierre Svara says he hopes to have the cash to buy Morientes outright. This also appears unlikely. The club are only just emerging from financial chaos, while Morientes' value has increased over the past nine months. Secondly, the player is cute enough to know Monaco will not be heading so far down this road again, so there is no point in hanging around. At 28 the Spaniard needs career security and stability.

First, though, comes the chance to bring honours to the principality. "It's difficult when we are also going for the French League title at the same time," he says. "Look at Real Madrid and Chelsea. Go for two trophies at once and you risk losing both. But I think we have a remarkable attitude here."

Morientes would happily swap his nine goals for a Monaco win in the Final. Not that he is underestimating Porto. He says: "Porto have been steadily improving for several years now. They didn't reach the Final through luck. Last season they won the UEFA Cup, this season they've knocked out Manchester United and Deportivo."

Significant role

Morientes will be making his 71st European club appearance in the Final having played in 65 Champions League games (26 goals) and five in the Cup-winners Cup (two goals). The Final will be unusual: the first time since 1991 that no club from England, Germany, Italy or Spain will be competing. Morientes played a significant role in ensuring that was the case with his goals against Madrid.

But he plays down scoring against his own club, saying: "I'm a professional. I've played against my first club, Zaragoza, for Madrid. This was no different. OK, the stage was bigger. But you go out and do your best for your team. With the national team, players from Barcelona and Valencia are your team-mates; next weekend they are your opponents at club level. You get used to it."

Morientes had to get used – and quickly – to playing for Monaco, who signed him in a rush after a serious injury to leading scorer Shabani Nonda. He says: "I had a confidence problem at first. I was a reserve at Madrid, hardly playing. Overnight, I found myself starting every match in a championship that had already been going for a month."

Morientes led Madrid's attack to Champions League triumph over Juventus in 1998, Valencia in 2000 (he scored the first goal) and Bayer Leverkusen in 2002. But he says: "To win with Monaco would be a greater achievement than any of those."

> 'No one ever remembers the runners-up. In a Final all that matters is who won'

How they got there...Monaco

High resilience, high quality from Deschamps' men

MONACO ENTERED THE knockout stage after topping Group C, ahead of Deportivo La Coruna. The group game included an incredible 8-3 thrashing of Deportivo in Monaco. Dado Prso, in for the injured Fernando Morientes, marked his 29th birthday with four sensational goals.

Monaco came out of the UEFA goldfish bowl with Lokomotiv Moscow in the second round. The big freeze almost caught them out. Fortunately Morientes headed a late goal after Lokomotiv failed to clear Jerome Rothen's free-kick and they lost 'only' 2-1.

"That's better than I expected at one stage," said coach Didier Deschamps. "One goal will be enough in the second leg." Prso duly scored it, on the hour, after missing a first-half penalty.

In the quarter-finals Monaco, their domestic form fading and with skipper Ludovic Giuly hampered by injury, drew Real Madrid. Deschamps' fears appeared well-founded when Madrid led 4-1 with nine minutes to go. Then up stepped Morientes with another priceless late goal – against the club who loaned him to Monaco last August.

The return entered French football legend. Raul extended Madrid's overall lead, and Giuly's equaliser in first-half stoppage time seemed of minimal importance. But, as Giuly walked off frowning, so Zinedine Zidane muttered: "Haven't you worked it out? We're absolutely shattered."

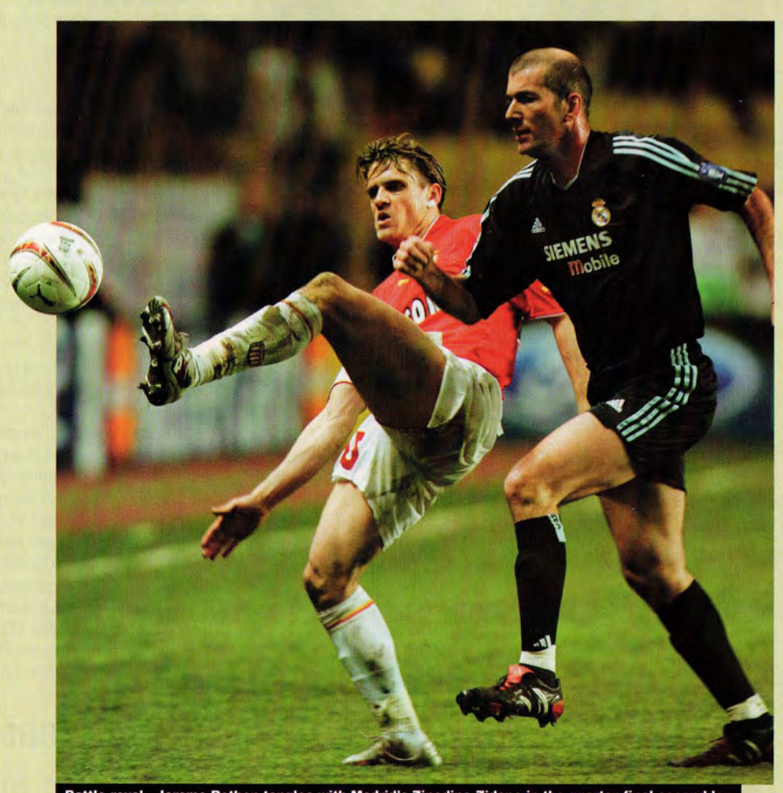
Morientes, who had provided the assist for Giuly's goal, headed Monaco's second shortly after the restart. Then Hugo Ibarra forged up the right and his cross-shot was flicked home by Giuly. At 5-5 on aggregate, Monaco had triumphed on away goals.

"Now we don't need to fear anyone," said Giuly. Not even Chelsea. Monaco hit back from 1-0 down, despite having Akis Zikos sent off, to beat west London's big spenders 3-1 in the first leg in Monte Carlo. Chelsea manager Claudio Ranieri was blamed for misjudging his use of substitutes. But that was to underrate Monaco's resilience.

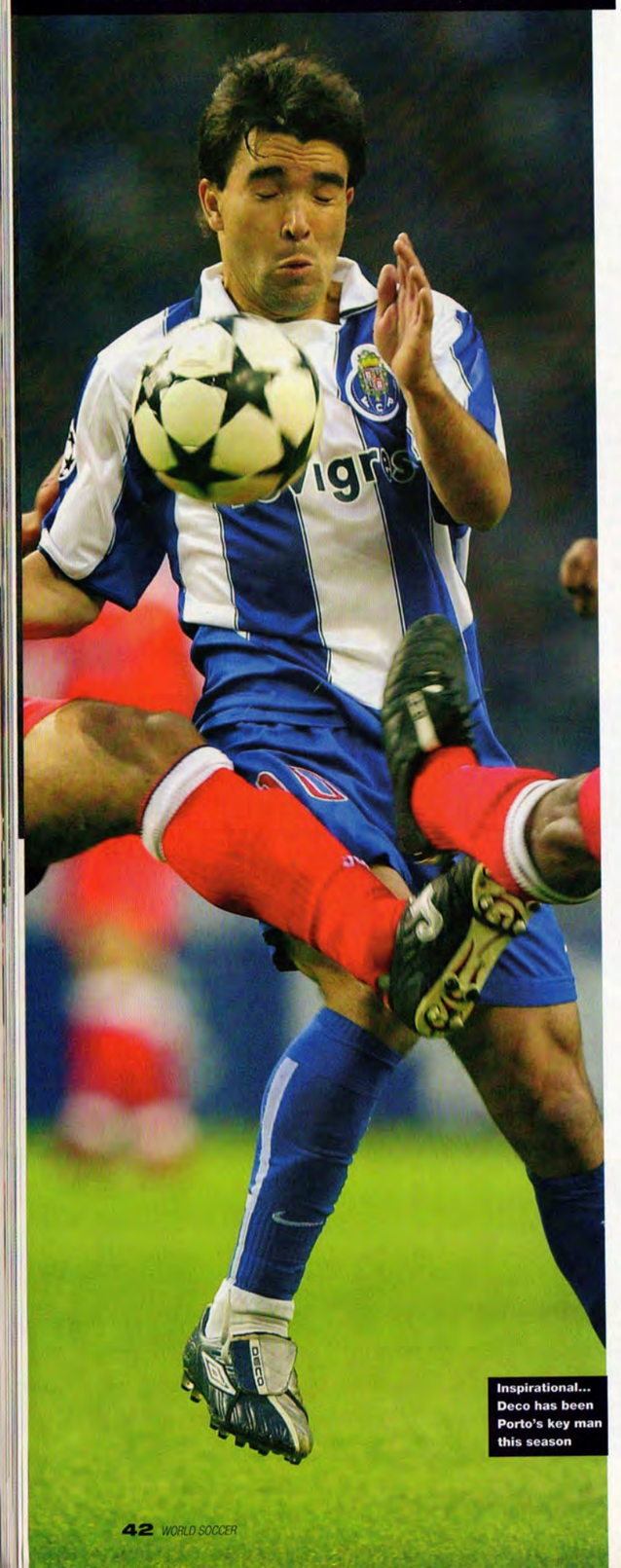
Back at Stamford Bridge Ranieri and co made the same mistake again. Chelsea went 2-0 up only to concede a spirit-deflating and controversial goal to Ibarra, who appeared to handle before scoring, right on half-time. Morientes drove in a superb equaliser to secure a 2-2 draw.

"It's a fantastic achievement," said Deschamps. "We have worked hard and put in a lot of quality performances along the way."

Keir Radnedge



Battle royal...Jerome Rothen tangles with Madrid's Zinedine Zidane in the quarter-final second leg



Inspirational... Deco has been Porto's key man this season

Swimmingwith the sharks

Porto, shrewd operators in the transfer market, may be about to lose their prize assets

AFTER THE UEFA Cup Final victory over Celtic last May, Porto coach Jose Mourinho was asked about rumours that he was on the point of moving on. He responded that he had worked hard at Porto, wanted to see how far he could go in the Champions League and would then consider his options.

Reaching the 2004 Final was not among his calculations. He said: "We can do quite well but we cannot expect to live with the sharks. Winning the Champions League is for clubs who can afford 20 or 30 or 40 million euros on one player."

Twelve months on, Porto are big fish themselves.

The club could now become the first to win the UEFA and Champions Cups in consecutive seasons since Liverpool in 1977. Their success in seeing off the likes of Manchester United, Lyon and Deportivo La Coruna en route to the Final in Gelsenkirchen has earned the club between £15 and £20million in prize money and TV revenue, while Mourinho is now the most feted coach in the world.

Yet the entire Porto squad has been put together for a fraction of the cost of Chelsea or Real Madrid's expensive collection of stars.

The case of Porto's 2004 vintage offers proof that talented players, with a confident coach and a shrewd transfer policy, can outwit and outplay Europe's big-spending superclubs.

Last summer, Porto sold Helder Postiga and Nuno Capucho, two of the stars of their UEFA Cup triumph, to Tottenham and Rangers respectively, for a total of approximately £13m. Only a small proportion of that revenue was spent on new players. Some £2.4m went on South African striker Benni McCarthy, who had scored 12 goals in 10 games while on loan from Celta Vigo in the 2001-02 season.

The remainder of Porto's transfer activity centred on the club's two traditional sources of players: smaller Portuguese rivals and Brazil.

Brazilian teenager Bruno Moraes arrived from Santos for a nominal fee, while swap deals brought in midfielders Pedro Mendes (Vitoria Guimaraes), Bosingwa (Boavista) and Ricardo Fernandes (Sporting Lisbon) for little more than £1million.

In addition, the squad was reinforced during the January transfer window with the acquisition of Brazilian teenager Carlos Alberto and experienced Portuguese international winger Sergio Conceicao, who, out of favour at Lazio, returned to Porto on loan for the remainder of the season, though he was not eligible for the Champions League.

Players for peanuts

The signings hardly suggested that Porto were about to set Europe alight. Yet Mourinho has made a habit of picking up players for a song. Striker Derlei and left-back Nuno Valente both followed Mourinho from Uniao Leiria; the coach proudly proclaims that he signed Derlei "for peanuts".

So credit to Mourinho for moulding one of the smallest squads in this season's Champions League into a tight-knit unit that has challenged successfully on three fronts: retaining the Portuguese title by a country mile while also reaching the Finals of the Champions League and Portuguese Cup.

Inevitably, attention focused on Mourinho's future in the build-up to Gelsenkirchen. But just as important to the success of Porto over the past two seasons has been midfielder Deco.

Club president Jorge Nuno Pinta da Costa describes the Brazil-born midfielder as the "jewel in Porto's crown" and is a fierce protector of his club's assets. Last month Pinta da Costa reacted angrily to Chelsea's clandestine meetings with Mourinho's representatives. "I want to make it clear that we will go to war with Chelsea over Mourinho," said Pinta da Costa. "We will bring in UEFA, FIFA, whoever we need to. The attitude of the Russian [Roman Abramovich] is the worst I have seen in the football world. He thinks that after buying Chelsea he can do what he wants and skip all the established rules."

While the president was upset at another clumsy attempt by Chelsea to 'tap up' a well-respected coach, he was equally well aware that if Mourinho were to accept Abramovich's petro-millions this summer, Deco could also follow his coach to London.

To lose Mourinho would be a setback for Porto. To lose Deco would be a disaster.

Deco has been the heart, soul and lungs of Mourinho's Porto team. The midfielder's low centre of gravity makes him hard for opponents to shake off. It also means that he is capable of adapting to the different types of football played in Europe's major leagues. Hence the interest across the continent – and not just from clubs who have been linked with Mourinho – in signing Deco this summer.

Midfielder Costinha and right-back Paulo Ferreira have also been linked with moves abroad this summer. But it is Deco who will be Porto's most likely match-winner in Gelsenkirchen. Unfortunately for Porto, he is also the most likely catch for the "sharks" who are now circling the club's juiciest assets.

Gavin Hamilton

> 'Mourinho has made a habit of picking up players for a song'

How they got there...Porto

Belgrade to Gelsenkirchen, via Madrid and Manchester

PORTO'S ROUTE to the Final began in Belgrade, when Costinha scored to earn a 1-1 draw against Lothar Matthaus's Partizan in the opening group game.

At home to Real Madrid Costinha was again on target in their 3-1 defeat. It was thus not until their third outing that the Portuguese champions chalked up a first win, 3-2 away to Marseille. Maniche, Derlei and substitute Dmitri Alenichev scored the goals.

Alenichev also scored the winner, the only goal, in the return in the new Dragao stadium, and Benni McCarthy struck both goals in the 2-1 return win against Partizan. That guaranteed Porto second place in the group behind Madrid, with whom they drew in the academic concluding tie. Mourinho rested Jorge Costa, Mario Silva, Maniche and McCarthy but still secured a mutually-satisfying 1-1 scoreline on a 35th-minute penalty converted by Derlei after Michel Salgado had brought down Deco.

McCarthy was back, to devastating effect, for the start of the knockout section, at home to Manchester United. The run-up to the game could not have been worse for Mourinho. Derlei had been ruled out – for the entire season it was thought then – by injury, and Costinha was suspended. On the brighter side, teenage Brazilian Carlos Alberto stepped in effectively up front.

United went ahead on 14 minutes through Quinton Fortune but suffered from the need to put out a makeshift central defensive partnership in Gary Neville and Wes Brown. South African McCarthy punished them with a volley in the 29th minute and header in the 78th. United suffered a further setback when skipper Roy Keane was sent off for needlessly treading on keeper Vitor Baia.

Paul Scholes put United level on aggregate and ahead on away goals after 32 minutes at Old Trafford. But it was not enough. A second Scholes goal was – incorrectly – ruled out for offside just before half-time. In the last minute Costinha disobeyed orders by drifting forward to score from close range after Tim Howard only parried a McCarthy free-kick.

"I was supposed to get in among the wall," said Costinha later, "but I just sensed there might be a rebound so I found a bit of space – and that's where the ball came back to me."

European experience paid off for Porto against Lyon in the quarter-finals. Deco and Ricardo Carvalho struck for a 2-0 home win, and Maniche scored both goals in France. Lyon snatched a pride-preserving 2-2 draw in front of their own fans courtesy only of a last-minute goal from Giovane Elber.

Maniche hit the crossbar when Porto were held goalless by Deportivo La Coruna in the first leg of a semi-final that was a virtual cross-border derby in the north-west corner of the Iberian peninsula.

Porto found the Riazor stadium a home from home in the return. Mourinho gambled on a recall for barely-fit-again Derlei but the Brazilian came up trumps by converting the 58th-minute penalty that proved to be the only goal of the tie – and sent the UEFA Cup holders into the Final.

Keir Radnedge

Ruled out...Manchester United's Paul Scholes beat Porto keeper Vitor Baia but was judged to be offside

Flying...Drogba has confounded the critics who scoffed at his move to Marseille

From zero to hero

Marseille striker Didier Drogba has been one of the star performers of the European season. Keir Radnedge reports

LAST SUMMER Alain Perrin, then manager of Olympique Marseille, raised more than a few eyebrows when he made Guingamp's Ivory Coast striker, Didier Drogba, his club's major signing of the summer.

The former European champions had decided Drogba was the man to spearhead the attempt to restore their reputation and dispel all memory of the scandal-hit European Cup victory of 1993.

His first step out on to the most prestigious stage, in the group phase of the Champions League, was hardly notable as Marseille lost 4-2 away to Real Madrid. Second time out, however, was a different matter. Partizan Belgrade held out until half-time in Marseille but were stunned by a 22-minute Drogba hat-trick. Marseille won 4-0, and suddenly Perrin's purchase was being hailed as a master stroke.

Perrin, of course, did not last much longer. If his judgment in team selection and tactics had matched his assessment of this one particular player then OM might have elbowed Monaco out of a place in the Champions League Final.

> 'Tourcoing gave me a hard time. I was just 15 and felt I was the worst player in the squad'

Drogba, at least, has no regrets. Indeed, his five goals in the Champions League for Marseille, his six in their run to the UEFA Cup Final, plus 18 in the French championship may even have pushed him towards yet another transfer this summer.

No one now will question the judgment of any prospective purchaser of the boy from Abidjan who was destined for football glory.

Drogba says: "My family tell me I was given my first football shirt – an Argentina shirt – when I was two years old, but I don't remember it. But then, I don't remember ever not playing football when I was a kid in Abidjan. And then I came to France when I was five to stay with the family of an uncle, Michel Goba, who was a professional in the Second Division. He used to give me his shirts and I'd dream of being Jean-Pierre Papin or Rudi Voller or Alen Boksic – all of whom were Marseille players at one time or another, coincidentally."

Attack was not Drogba's preferred role. When he started getting serious about youth football in Dunkirk he played right-back, albeit pushing up into attack as often as he could. Only after joining Abbeville was he switched to centre-forward.

"It was an unusual progression," agrees Drogba, "and for a long time it didn't seem to work. I joined Tourcoing and they gave me such a hard time I felt I was the worst player in the squad. I was 15, I was falling behind at school and failing my exams, so I gave up football for a year."

Pornin to the rescue

He was rescued for football by a youth coach, Christian Pornin, who remembered Drogba as a boy in Dunkirk and persuaded him to take a trial with Levallois. The move made all the difference. Drogba recalls: "He introduced me to proper preparation and training – and suddenly I was scoring loads of goals. It was brilliant – and then Guingamp offered me a trial."

That was in 1997. Suddenly Drogba the drop-out found himself training with internationals like Vincent Candela. And then he broke a toe. Guingamp lost interest. Paris Saint-Germain asked him to come along for a run-out but Drogba had heard nothing good about PSG and turned them down. It was dangerous arrogance, but the gamble paid off.

"The day I said no to PSG I got a phone call from Marc Westerloppe, coach of Le Mans in the Second Division," says Drogba. "He became my 'spiritual football father'. He got me on the right track, though I gave them a lot of problems because I was such a late developer after all the earlier problems.

"I got into the team and scored some goals. Then I had a lot of niggling injuries and they got rid of Westerloppe. I wasn't happy, but then Guingamp came back for me. I think only the manager, Guy Lacombe, believed in me but I scored three goals in 11 matches in the second half of the 2001-02 season and that gave me confidence."

Last season Drogba made his senior debut for the Ivory Coast and scored 17 goals for Guingamp, including two away to champions-elect Lyon in the closing weeks of term. That was when Perrin and Marseille made their move.

The negotiations did not faze him. Drogba says: "It's not my business. I'd had enough problems building my career. The only pressure on me has been to keep improving – and score goals. If I can go on doing that, so much the better for everyone."

Paths to the Final

How Valencia and Marseille chased the dream

DOUBLE DREAMS FILLED the head of Valencia coach Rafa Benitez as he guided his men to the UEFA Cup Final while simultaneously carrying off their second Spanish League title in three seasons.

Victory over Turkish surprise package Genclerbirligi brought Valencia up against Bordeaux in the quarter-finals. Goals from Ruben Baraja and Francisco Rufete in the last 15 minutes of the first leg brought Valencia a 2-1 win away to the French side, who finished with 10 men after Antonio Mavuba was sent off for kicking Mohamed Sissoko.

Another 2-1 win in the second leg took Valencia into an all-Spanish semi-final with Villarreal.

The InterToto Cup graduates had added Celtic to their lengthening list of surprised victims in the quarter-finals. Villarreal drew 1-1 in Scotland in the first leg, Josico scoring early on, with Henrik Larsson getting a second-half equaliser.

In the return, Villarreal's Sonny Anderson punished slack defending after only six minutes. The veteran Brazilian also laid on the cross from which midfielder Roger Garcia cracked a superb and decisive second goal.

Villarreal had never expected to go as far as the semi-finals and gave a brave account of themselves. But in Valencia they came up against opponents who knew them too well. A goalless first leg was followed by an early second leg bombardment. This climaxed when Mista converted a penalty – it proved to be the only goal – after being fouled by Juliano Belletti.

If Valencia were the outstanding team on one side of the draw, the other side provided the competition's outstanding individual in Marseille's Didier Drogba.

In the quarter-finals the Ivory Coast striker grabbed the first-leg winner at home to Internazionale, though he also collected a yellow card which ruled him out of the return.

Remarkably, he was not missed as Inter allowed themselves to be caught on the break by Carmel Meriem in the second half.

In the semi-finals Marseille came up against a Newcastle side seeking their first major trophy since they won the Fairs Cup back in 1969. Newcastle had beaten one of manager Sir Bobby Robson's old clubs, PSV Eindhoven, in a low-key quarter-final in which the outgoing Dutch champions failed to rise to the occasion.

That was fortunate for Newcastle, but they ran out of luck against Marseille. Robson's men lacked penetration in attack in the first leg because of the absences through injury of Wales striker Craig Bellamy and England midfielders Jermaine Jenas and Kieron Dyer. Drogba hit a post and Marseille were unlucky not to win.

Before the second leg Newcastle suffered further injury upset when Jonathan Woodgate tore a thigh muscle, ruling him out of the rest of the season. Without him – as well as the rest – Newcastle went down 2-0.

Drogba, inevitably, scored both goals to take his tally to six since Marseille's mid-season relegation from the Champions League.

Keir Radnedge

Two-way stretch...Villarreal skipper Quique Alvarez battles two Valencia players in the semi-final

No regrets... Laudrup would not swap the trophies he won with Barça to have been a part of Denmark's Euro 92 triumph

King of Denmark

In the latest of a special series of interviews to mark UEFA's golden jubilee, former Danish star Michael Laudrup – now back in his home country as coach of Brondby – looks back over recent European Championships and shares his own memories of contesting for Europe's top title

DENMARK MAY BE a small country but it has competed in six successive European Championships – something countries like England, Spain, Italy and Holland haven't managed. And we've qualified even when the team hasn't had so many talented players. It's just not logical.

The 1984 tournament was very exciting because it was the first big finals not only for me but also for Denmark. We knew we had a good team, but no one else did! Our first game was against hosts France, at the Parc des Princes, so we just decided to enjoy it, play our football and see what happened. We played well and were a bit unlucky to lose to a goal from Michel Platini. But the team was fired up.

The next game was even bigger. We had never beaten Yugoslavia but suddenly everything clicked and we won 5-0. Our fans had been in the minority against France but now there were so many red and white flags, T-shirts and faces painted in Danish colours, it was amazing. From then on, we were always known as 'roligans', in contrast to hooligans.

We started well enough against Belgium in Strasbourg in our last group game but found ourselves 2-0 down after about half an hour. We scored from a penalty at the end of the first half and Kenneth Brylle equalised after the break. A draw was probably enough to take us to the semi-finals, but then [Preben] Elkjaer scored a fantastic goal, running through from midfield all on his own. Another incredible victory, and we were in the last four of the first big tournament we'd ever played in.

The semi-final was a huge disappointment. We played better than Spain, were 1-0 up after six minutes, and in the second half we hit the woodwork. If we'd gone two up, I'm sure we would have won. But Spain equalised and we lost on penalties.

Classic playmaker

Platini was outstanding for France, who went on to win the tournament. He was a classic playmaker, the type you don't see so often these days, who comes and fetches the ball out of defence, can dribble past three or four players and make all the important passes. He was also a good finisher.

But also France were one of the first countries, at least in Europe, to have a midfield where all four players could do everything; it wasn't just Platini plus three others to do the running for him – Alain Giresse, Jean Tigana and Luis Fernandez made it a complete midfield because they could all be playmakers.

By Euro 88, Denmark were facing a problem. There were several players who had maybe one more year before retiring from the national team or from the game altogether, and there were other players with injuries; I was one of them. We had at least seven or eight players who had been in the team since 1982. So what was the coach, Sepp Piontek, supposed to do? Tell five or six players who'd been the most important for six years that they were out? Or keep them in?

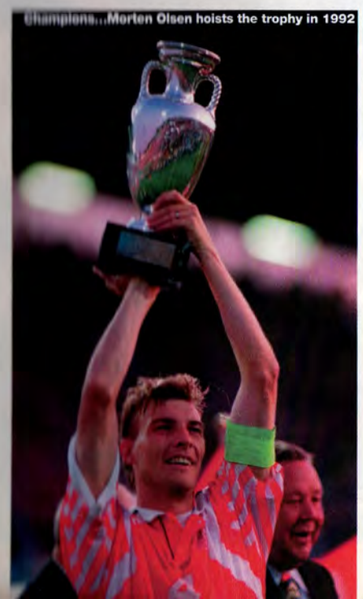
Piontek decided to let them have one last tournament, but it didn't work out. We lost all three games, though they were against Spain, Germany and Italy, three of the five best teams in the world.

We lost 3-2, 2-0 and 2-0 respectively and could have done better. But now as a coach I admit I would have done the same as Piontek.

Then came 1992, Denmark's greatest achievement, but I was not part of it. I was still playing for Barcelona right up until the finals started. The first game was a boring 0-0 draw with England. The second, against Sweden, was poor and we lost 1-0, which meant we had to beat France. I heard it was 1-1 and thought it was all over. But then my father-in-law phoned and said we'd won.

On the day of the semi-final against Holland we were in New York. When I phoned home, my father-in-law was watching the penalty shoot-out. He was telling me: "This one's in; now he's scored; and now they've equalised." By the time of the Final against Germany, we were in the Caribbean. I called home at half-time and heard Denmark were leading 1-0. I called back an hour later and they said we'd won. It was incredible.

Did I regret having stayed out of the team? I have to admit that at the final whistle and when the trophy was handed to our captain, Morten Olsen [now national coach], it would have been nice to be there. But I had made a choice in 1989, and I had my reasons. It was a delicate situation for me. People were rating me highly and I'd moved from Juventus to Barcelona. I'd already been part of what you might call two different Denmark teams – one in the mid-80s and one from 1988-90. I wasn't ready to be at the centre of a third Danish team at the same time as I was expected to perform for my new club.



Champions...Morten Olsen hoists the trophy in 1992

Euro memories... Denmark beat England to put themselves on the road to Euro 84 (top); Laudrup against Portugal in 1996 (left); Marco Delvecchio puts Italy in front in the 2000 Final against France

'I felt the national team's style wasn't getting the best out of me'

What's more, I felt the national team wasn't getting the best out of me because the playing style was totally different from the football I was playing at my club. I thought that once I had been recognised as an international-class player at my club, I could come back into the national team.

Overall, I'm convinced it was the right thing to do. I don't regret it – and I wouldn't exchange the Euro 92 trophy for all the other trophies I won and all the things I achieved in Spain.

Too much expectation

Euro 96 was very difficult for Denmark. The Danish people expected a bit too much, figuring that if we could win in '92, we could at least go to the semi-finals or the Final again. In fact, if you look at the results, they were exactly the same as in 1992: we started by drawing 1-1 with Portugal, who had a better team than us, just as we had drawn with England in 1992; we lost a poor second game to Croatia, 3-0, just as we'd lost to Sweden; and then we beat Turkey, just as we'd beaten France four years earlier. The big difference was that while we qualified for the semi-finals in 1992, in 1996 we didn't.

Now it's France who go into Euro 2004 as reigning champions. For the past six or seven years, the French have shown they're one of the best teams in Europe. But successful teams also need a little luck. I thought France were very lucky in the Euro 2000 Final in Rotterdam – don't forget they were 1-0 down to Italy in the third minute of second-half stoppage time. Even when they deservedly won the 1998 World Cup, they needed extra-time to beat Paraguay and penalties to beat Italy.

The French have many different cultures interacting among their players, and they're very good at taking young players and developing them – unlike top clubs in other countries, who buy players rather than educate them. That's the way of the future. I know that player education is also expensive, but it's not as costly as going out and buying a ready-made player of 25 or so. In Denmark, we have to develop our own players because there isn't enough money in the game to allow us to compete in the big marketplaces.

I'm convinced that every club side has to be built on native players. I know the rules say you can take players from anywhere in the European Union, but I would never have eight or nine foreign players in my team. In Denmark, we're used to educating young players; the best ones go abroad to improve, and then come back as assets to the national team. We have to do this because we're a small country. But I believe that all countries, big or small, should do the same.

Michael Laudrup was speaking exclusively with UEFA press officer Frits Ahlstrom on behalf of the ESM (European Sports Magazines) group

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FOOTBALL MEMORIES

Brian Glanville on the long reign of England manager Walter Winterbottom despite three devastating results

Survival skills

THE WONDER OF Walter Winterbottom, the first England manager but appointed as late as 1946, was that he should survive in office for 16 years, despite results that would surely have cost him his job with other countries.

His promoter and protector, Stanley Rous, was at least once on the point of replacing him. In the spring of 1955, when, as a young journalist, I was working in Rome, the then Roma manager Jesse Carver told me he was due to meet Rous at the Hotel Quirinale and asked if I'd like to come along.

Large and grandiose as always, Rous was waiting for us in the hotel lobby. "Did you have a good journey, Sir Stanley?" I asked. "Yes, yes, yes," he rumbled. "Who are you?"

Who indeed? A journalist unknown to him at the time and therefore of such scant significance that he proceeded, in my presence, to offer Carver the England job. "It's about time we brought Walter into the office!"

In the event, they didn't, and Carver didn't take the job. Overall, however, Rous defended Winterbottom to the hilt.

It was for many years customary among professional players to deride Winterbottom's supposed deficiencies as a footballer. In fact he had a perfectly respectable even substantial career in the latter 1930s as a centre-half with Manchester United.

He used the money he earned as a player to put himself through Carnegie Physical Education College. During the war, in which he worked as a wing commander in the Air Ministry, he was a guest player with Chelsea. I remember seeing him as an emergency full-back on Christmas Day 1942, when Chelsea beat a depleted Arsenal team 5-2.

Winterbottom had fluency and charm. He generously gave me a long interview around 1952 in his office at Lancaster Gate during which he said that he regarded his role as director of coaching as more important than the England managership.

'It was customary to deride his deficiencies as a player. In fact he had a perfectly respectable career with Manchester United'

The charge made against Winterbottom by the likes of Raich Carter and Tommy Lawton – already famous players when he took over – was that he was no more than a blown-up PE teacher, teaching his grandmother to suck eggs. Later, Bobby Charlton derided Winterbottom's inability to talk the language of the troops.

Billy Wright once said Winterbottom was "a university-educated intellectual, whose depth of knowledge about the tactics and techniques of the game were unequalled".

But Stanley Matthews was a sceptic, and of course there was the famous occasion during an England training session when Winterbottom told the five forwards that he wanted them to go down the field interpassing, then put the ball into the empty goal. At which, maverick inside-forward Len Shackleton looked up wearily and asked: "Which side of the goal, Mr Winterbottom?"

Fluency and charm...Winterbottom

There were also three quite devastating results during his reign – the 1-0 defeat by the USA in Belo Horizonte in the 1950 World Cup, and the two humiliating beatings by the Hungarians: 6-3 at Wembley in 1953, 7-1 in Budapest the following May.

During that period, Winterbottom was in the farcical position of not being allowed to pick his own teams, having to defer to a committee of selectors. By the 1958 World Cup finals, however, it was plain to us journalists that he was calling the shots.

I never blamed him for the American defeat. Even without Stanley Matthews this was an England team packed with stars – Wright, Finney, Mortensen, Mannion, Williams – that should have won in a canter.

The Hungary games were something else again and completely gainsaid Wright's view of Winterbottom as a master tactician. In both games his tactics were inept. At Wembley, he let centre-half Harry Johnston stand off deep-lying centre-forward Nandor Hidegkuti, deputed no other marker, and Hidegkuti scored three. In Budapest, though admittedly handed a somewhat odd-looking team to deploy, how could Winterbottom not devise a defensive plan at least to avoid such a thrashing, knowing all he did by then about the Hungarians?

FROM THE ARCHIVES
JUNE 1974

IN STARK CONTRAST to the current problems of the German national side, West Germany were the favourites to win the 1974 World Cup finals, which kicked off 30 years ago on their home patch.

German optimism was fully justified. Bayern Munich had just won their – and West Germany's – first European Cup, albeit after a replay with Atletico Madrid. It was to be the first of three successive triumphs.

"The pendulum seems to have swung to West Germany again," wrote Brian Glanville in his tournament preview. "They must be joint favourites – with Italy and Holland." And so it was to prove.

The Germans were everywhere. Gerd Muller, top scorer at the 1970 World Cup finals in Mexico, graced the cover of the June 1974 edition of *World Soccer*.

Franz Beckenbauer, the West Germany captain, was the subject of an extensive profile in which he revealed he had no desire to stay in football after he stopped playing, least of all as a manager. "Not at any price," was his emphatic view.

Beckenbauer, of course, went on to win the World Cup as a player (1974) and coach (1990). In two years' time, when the World Cup finals return to Germany, Beckenbauer will be the public face of the host nation as president of the hosting committee.

FRANZ BECKENBAUER profile by Arthur Rotmil

FOOTBALL LINGO

#4 Leitwolf

A German phrase, literally meaning wolf, which is used to describe an inspirational player. In the past, the likes of Fritz Walter, Franz Beckenbauer, Lothar Matthaus and Matthias Sammer have had it applied to them. Of current players, Michael Ballack is often referred to as *leitwolf*.

QUIZ

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J Bellow from Wishaw, Lanarkshire. Answer: San Siro/Giuseppe Meazza Stadium

The *alternative* history of FIFA

FIFA was founded 100 years ago and has been celebrating as never before. But not everything about FIFA is quite as it seems...

FIFA'S CENTENARY WOULD have been celebrated two years ago if it had not been for the ponderous ways of the English Football Association. In spring 1902 the initial proposal for a world governing body was sent to Frederick Wall, secretary of the FA, in London.

The letter, posted on May 8, had been drafted by the secretary of the Dutch federation, Carl Anton Wilhelm Hirschmann, and a French journalist, Robert Guerin of *Le Matin*, who was also treasurer of the Union des Societes Francaises de Sports Athletiques.

They believed that the fast-growing popularity of football throughout Europe deserved international co-ordination, and this was 10 years after another Frenchman, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, had presided over the revival of the Olympic Games.

In fact, the French did not want to take the initiative. Guerin and Hirschmann believed, respectfully, that the FA should lead the way forward, summon the inaugural meeting, lay down the statutes and welcome all football-playing countries into the fold.

Wall did not see it that way. In fact, he did not see it at all. He replied on June 4, saying they would review the issue "though my council will not meet again until August".

It is fascinating to speculate what might have happened if Charles Alcock had still been running the FA. Alcock renowned, with good reason, as the "father of modern sport" was a visionary who would probably have appreciated the opportunity. But illness had begun to pull him down and he died four years later.

It took Wall 14 months to reply to Guerin and Hirschmann's missive. He ignored their invitation and responded that the FA had decided to invite foreign associations to a "conference to be held in England". It never happened.

In November 1903 the 'pupils' tried another tack. Guerin, on behalf of the USFSA, wrote to the FA proposing a federation of specifically European football associations. Wall did reply more quickly this time but in no more encouraging terms.

"The Council of the Football Association," said Wall, "cannot see the advantages of such a federation but, on all matters upon which joint action is desirable, they would be prepared to confer."

Patronising in the extreme, of course. The French would wait no longer. On May 1, 1904, as France and Belgium played their first international, so Guerin and Belgian federation secretary Louis Muhlinghaus agreed to go ahead regardless. Just under three weeks later, on May 21, delegates representing Belgium (Muhlinghaus and Max Kahn), Denmark (Ludvig Sylow), France (Guerin and his assistant Andre Espir), Holland (Hirschmann), Spain, Sweden and Switzerland (Victor E Schneider) met at the USFSA offices at 229 Rue Sainte-Honore in Paris and created the Federation Internationale de Football Association. The meeting also voted to itself the right to organise a world championship.

'FIFA's founding meeting was attended by men of only five nationalities'

Note the anglicised style of the title: it is the international federation of association football – not the federation of football associations. A subtle but significant differential.

France did not have a specific football federation so the USFSA took the lead. Spain did not have a federation either. Thus one of their club presidents took it upon himself to represent Spain: his name was Carlos Padros from Madrid FC (now, of course, Real Madrid). This was one of the reasons why FIFA president Sepp Blatter went out of his way to take an executive meeting to Madrid in December 2003. He believed FIFA was duty bound to honour the centenary of the club that helped give his organisation life a century earlier.

The hilarious truth is that Padros did not, as many subsequent accounts claim, attend FIFA's founding meeting. He sent his apologies and Frenchman Andre Espir voted as Spanish proxy. Similarly, no Swede was present and Sylow spoke and voted for them.

Thus the founding meeting of FIFA was attended variously by seven men representing seven countries but by men of only five nationalities.

Insular British

Guerin was the first, reluctant, president. But a year later, on April 14, 1905, Baron Edouard de Laveleye, president of the Belgian federation, persuaded the Football Association to come on board. For that service to the cause the Baron was rewarded by becoming the first honorary member of FIFA.

Irritated that not one of FIFA's members had entered the proposed world championship, Guerin quit. Schneider took over briefly before the election to the presidency in 1906 of England's Daniel Burley Woolfall, who led the international federation until his death in 1918.

It was under Woolfall's leadership that the suspicious, superior, insular British magnanimously agreed to admit foreign representation on the law-making International Board. It was also under Woolfall's leadership that FIFA became a truly world federation rather than a European one. In 1910 South Africa was admitted to membership, followed in 1912 by Chile and Argentina and by the United States a year later.

The first political wrangle came when FIFA was only three years old. In 1907 Bohemia applied for membership even though it was not a nation state but a region within the Austro-Hungarian empire. Bohemia, Austria and Hungary were all awarded independent membership by FIFA, which then withdrew Bohemia's recognition after protests by the Hungarians.

A year later Scotland and Ireland applied to join FIFA and were rebuffed on the grounds that they were not independent nations. They applied again the following year and this time were admitted as FIFA (bowing to the will of its English president) agreed that Britain, historically, deserved special treatment.

The shape of squabbles to come.

FIFA was not immune to the fallout from the First World War. Hirschmann, as secretary, kept the paperwork ticking over but must have wondered, in 1919, whether the effort had been worth it. Federations from the wartime allies, meeting in Brussels, decided to boycott international contact with antagonists Austria, Hungary and Germany, and demanded their withdrawal or expulsion from FIFA.

Other nations, notably Italy and those from Scandinavia, insisted on their right to play football against whoever they chose, and were also duly blacklisted by the allies.

Maiden voyage...Jules Rimet (right) arrives in Uruguay for the inaugural World Cup in 1930

'War-time allies demanded the expulsion of their antagonists from FIFA'

Austrian football's founding father, Hugo Meisl, always believed that English intransigence stemmed from Wall's loss of various relatives in the war. Compromise was shunned. On April 23, 1920, the British quartet resigned from FIFA and, acting on a proposal from the Irish FA,

banned FIFA's two representatives from the International Board.

The confusion over FIFA's very existence accounts for the presidential hiatus. Woolfall died in August 1918 but 48-year-old French lawyer Jules Rimet did not take over the mantle until March 1, 1921, seven years after attending his first FIFA congress.

Britain's absence lasted four years, and the home FAs quit again in 1928 in a row over 'broken-time' payments. There were other issues. For instance, FIFA (in acquiring International Olympic Committee approval for broken-time payments) had told the IOC that it was now the "highest authority in all matters pertaining to football", phraseology that put the FA's nose out of joint.

At a distance of more than 70 years it is difficult to understand the passions and bitterness engendered by the amateur issue. The British and their colonial cousins believed that amateurism was a strict code representing the ultimate purity of recreational sport, and that meant no money changing hands for any reason at any time. The rest of FIFA believed it was acceptable for associations to make up any loss of earnings suffered by players who missed work to play for their country (hence, 'broken time').

World Cup wars

The battle between traditionalist amateurs and progressive professionals caused chaos in many countries. Two championships ran simultaneously in Argentina, for example, for three years at the turn of the 1930s – one amateur, one professional.

Nowadays, countries who quit, are expelled or suspended from FIFA are barred from all match contact with FIFA members. Not so in the 1930s. The home countries continued to play friendly matches against their former partners in FIFA. The only arena in which the Brits missed out was, however, the most important – the World Cup.

The histories of FIFA and the World Cup are bound inextricably. The competition took 26 years to get off the ground after being proposed at the founding meeting and after Guerin's abortive attempt to launch his initial championship in 1906.

It also created a schism within the fledgling FIFA. Six of the seven would-be hosts were European but Uruguay offered to meet everyone's travel costs and won the day at the Barcelona congress of 1929. Six months later the Europeans who supported the theory turned their backs when it came to practicalities. None of them entered. It was too far to sail and demanded too much time of players and officials in the days before full-time professionalism was a worldwide standard.

Rimet's response was weak and indecisive. Four months before the finals were due to kick-off, he discussed a double World Cup – with one set of matches played in Europe and the other in South America.

The idea was stillborn. No one liked that one either. Rimet was also president of the French federation and was left with no alternative but to press his own reluctant team into going, as did Belgium's Rodolphe Seeldrayers. Yugoslavia agreed to go and so did Romania after King Carol volunteered to pay for cover in the team members' places of work. The Belgian, Romanian and French parties (including Rimet and his daughter) all sailed together.

Uruguay, of course, won with a display of talent and style that prompted a conundrum still bothering FIFA to this day: intercontinental transfers. Immediately after the finals Italian clubs raided Uruguay and Argentina and used players from both countries to win the World Cups of 1934 (by which time FIFA had reached the landmark of 50 members) and 1938.

England could have played at the 1938 World Cup in France. The field was cut from 16 to 15 when Hitler's armies marched into Austria in the *Anschluss* that spring. Austria and its football were swallowed up in Greater Germany. FIFA offered England the spare place, for old time's diplomatic sake...and were turned down.

Then came war. FIFA had long since moved from Paris to Zurich in neutral Switzerland but Ottorino Barassi, secretary of the Italian federation, had no way of getting the World Cup trophy to safety. Instead he variously hid it under his bed and then in a chicken coop on a farm to keep it out of the hands of the Nazis.

How sad that, having survived the war, the trophy was finally lost because of the dismal failings of Brazilian security 30 years later. It was on display in the offices of the Brazilian federation in Rio de Janeiro when it was stolen by a group of petty thieves, who had it melted down.

After the Second World War FIFA had 57 members but no money. The reconvened congress in Luxembourg in 1946 decided to stage the first post-war World Cup in Brazil in 1949 and also decided to name the trophy after Rimet himself.

'No one liked Rimet's idea of a double World Cup in Europe and South America'

Thus was formalised the misleading legend of Rimet as father of the World Cup. He was nothing of the sort. The trophy, if it were to be named after anyone, should have been named after Hirschmann, FIFA's general secretary from 1906 to 1931. Rimet was a comparatively late arrival at the World Cup party. But Hirschmann had stood aside in Rimet's favour when it came to picking a new president in 1921 and it was on Rimet's 'watch' that the World Cup was launched.

On his way up... Stanley Rous (second left) referees a Hungary-Italy match in 1933

Simultaneously the secretary of the Football Association, Stanley Rous, negotiated the re-entry of the four home countries into FIFA. Rous swung the deal by offering FIFA the gate receipts from a Hampden Park friendly between the home countries on the one hand and the Rest of the World on the other.

As part of the deal Rous also shrewdly negotiated a formal undertaking from FIFA guaranteeing the individual status of the home nations in terms of both playing international football and of four individual votes within FIFA. (It says much about the surviving status of Britain, and more specifically England, that the status quo has been retained in the newly-revised FIFA statutes. Suggestions that the British exception be scrapped met with resounding opposition within the FIFA executive).

The Home Championship was even used as the British quartet's World Cup qualifying group for both the finals in Brazil, postponed from 1949 to 1950, and those in 1954 in Switzerland.

FIFA was back on its feet and the four-yearly staging of the World Cup kept it that way even without TV deals and sponsors. Rimet stepped down as president in 1954 after handing the World Cup, now bearing his name, over to Germany's winning captain, Fritz Walter. Seeldrayers succeeded him, too late; he died the following year. Englishman Arthur Drewry was next in line but the apparent curse of the FIFA presidency saw him die in office as well, in 1961. Drewry was followed by another Englishman in Rous.

It was an era of expansion that also brought a significant development in the administration of the game worldwide.

Confederations emerge

Recent FIFA presidents, Joao Havelange and Blatter, for instance, have talked about the FIFA pyramid as if this was the original blueprint that is now set in stone. This was not the case. The confederations were created out of dissatisfaction with this remote tiny body in Switzerland.

South America, for obvious reasons, had created the first regional confederation in 1916. But that was an exception for geographical and communications reasons. It was the gathering of the 1954 World Cup finals that saw the birth of the Asian and European federations (AFC and UEFA). Three years later Africa created CAF, with CONCACAF following in 1961 and Oceania in 1966.

Thus the famous pyramid came into being through an accident of frustration. It will have to be amended sooner or later to recognise the changing balance in power between leagues and associations, clubs and countries. The sponsorship and television revolution that Havelange launched in the late 1970s has empowered the club game more than the national team game. FIFA must come to grips with that reality – and do so in a more intelligent way than by merely throwing the clubs of the developing world the sop of a World Club Championship.

To be fair, Rous welcomed all these initiatives. He had also been one of the moving forces in the early 1950s behind the launch of the Inter-City Industrial Fairs Cup. Its conception came just before *L'Equipe's* creation of the European Champions Club Cup, which gave UEFA an immediate administrative purpose.

It's an intriguing thought that, if the Fairs Cup had been quicker to the launch, FIFA itself might have controlled the burgeoning European club competitions. (The Champions Cup quickly assumed primacy for two reasons: first, access depended solely upon sporting merit whereas the Fairs Cup was launched with a well-intentioned but ultimately facile socio-industrial resonance; secondly, the criteria for entry into the Champions Cup forced it into a single-season straitjacket; the first Fairs Cup took a near-suicidal three years to complete.)

Rous reigned until 1974. During his 13 years FIFA expanded from 90 countries to more than 130 and launched its first development schemes in Africa and Asia. The fact that African votes ultimately cost Rous his presidency was not the only irony: seeds for that rebellion had been sown by Rous and FIFA's own organisation of the 1966 World Cup, 'back home' in England.

Rous was one of the towering sports administrators of the 20th century. He was first an international referee then secretary of the Football Association and he wrote the 'modern' version of the laws of the game. But he was also a child of the Empire who failed, ultimately, to cope with the impatience for change in the wider world.

North Korea's participation at the 1966 World Cup finals is one of the legends of the game. Yet the Koreans probably would not have been there had it not been for Rous's intransigence. The African nations wanted one guaranteed place at the finals. Rous refused, so the Africans boycotted the entire event. He had lost them.

Spreading the word... Havelange takes a cycle trip in China

On its own that would not have proved fatal to the Rous presidency. But, in 1973, he alienated a significant chunk of European votes through his handling of the Santiago stadium affair which followed the overthrow of the elected Marxist government of Salvador Allende.

The Estadio Nacional in Santiago, which had staged the 1962 World Cup Final, had been put to use as a concentration camp and interrogation (ie torture) facility. So it was hardly surprising later that year that the Soviet Union, when due to meet Chile in a qualifying play-off to reach the World Cup finals, refused point-blank to play there.

Rous flew to and fro trying to find a compromise in vain. In the end FIFA insisted the match be fulfilled, the Soviets refused to go and Chile were awarded a walk-over into the finals. The Soviets turned on Rous and pulled eastern bloc support behind the ambitious and politically far more astute Havelange at the 1974 congress in Frankfurt.

No incumbent president had ever faced an election challenge before. Rous was

'Rous failed to cope with the impatience for change in the wider world'

Commercial success... Argentina meet Brazil at the 1982 World Cup Finals

outmanoeuvred, utterly. The first vote failed to provide the necessary clear majority. But while Rous sat waiting for the second vote, so Havelange undertook a brisk tour of the delegations.

FIFA, international football and world sport would never be the same again.

Havelange came to power on a promise to expand the World Cup to accommodate Third World ambitions and supported by the political power of the German sportswear company Adidas. This was being wielded with increasing effect by Horst Dassler, son of the founding father, Adi (hence the company name).

Dassler, shy but hugely effective behind the scenes as he pulled the political strings, teamed up with super-salesman Patrick Nally. They brought in Coca-Cola to finance FIFA's repurchase of rights to its own images. They also created the concept of central event sponsorship sold at premium rates with the guarantee of worldwide television exclusivity.

Between them, the triumvirate of Havelange, Dassler and Nally revolutionised the finances of the World Cup and FIFA. The concept was duly leveraged to the advantage of other envious international confederations, national associations, leagues and clubs.

The commercially-led high-profile, TV-friendly world of sport we have today thus owes everything to the overthrow of Rous. The Champions League, which has revolutionised European football finances – and created an imbalance of club versus country power that is rocking the cornerstones of the world game – was 'sold' to UEFA by Dassler's former aide Klaus Hempel.

In the spring of 1982 Dassler, jealous of Nally's power, forced him out of the picture. During the subsequent World Cup finals in Spain, Dassler busily signed up more federations to Adidas and set up ISL Marketing. A grateful Havelange duly nailed the latter in place as FIFA's permanent marketing partner.

That partnership long survived Dassler's untimely death from cancer in 1987. The mutual loyalty between FIFA and ISL may also have owed much to the fact that it was Dassler who spirited Blatter out of Swiss Timing and into the heart of the FIFA machine in 1975.

The money financed an extraordinary explosion in the status, profile and development of world football. FIFA now has 204 members and an insatiable greed for more and more land on which to expand its Zurich headquarters. Havelange once noted that new nation states dither over which to join first – FIFA or the United Nations. He was not joking. Havelange does not 'do' jokes where football power is concerned.

Recent history does not need lengthy

'Blatter rode ferocious punches in Seoul before landing a knockout blow'

Politically astute ...Sepp Blatter

repetition. Havelange wielded absolute power and patronage in a manner that was not always pretty. He was one third of the unholy trinity of latin administrators who built a huge powerbase in world sport in the latter decades of the 20th century – along with Juan Antonio Samaranch at the head of the IOC and Primo Nebiolo of the (then) International Amateur Athletic Association.

Havelange, in particular, attracted heavy (and largely Anglo-Saxon) criticism for the way in which he went about achieving his ends. But his contribution to sport's revolution cannot be denied.

Greedy politicians

The worst product of the Havelange revolution has been the attraction into football of a new, unwelcome but irresistible breed of sports politician. Men and women with the good of their sport at heart have been outnumbered by those eyeing their cut of the spoils and trappings of power (not only the gold cuff links, five-star hotels and first-class flights but also the generous attendance allowances and the financial 'gratitude' expressed for their ability to favour this or that TV or commercial proposal).

FIFA, ideally, should scrap the attendance allowances as a gesture at least towards the concept of service to sport. Too many people enter the sports politics arena now because football serves self-interest.

Dictatorship generates unrest. FIFA, under Havelange, launched world cups at every level of the game. But, as time went on, so UEFA, empowered by the golden eggs of the Champions League, began to question Havelange's business style. That irritation was first manifest in Antonio Matarrese's doomed opposition to Havelange in the 1994 presidential election. But Havelange, sensibly, took the hint and stood down four years later.

Blatter nimbly outmanoeuvred UEFA president Lennart Johansson to win election at the 1998 Paris congress. By happy coincidence, FIFA was then just about to launch its development grant programmes.

Four years later Blatter faced opposition again, this time from Cameroon's Issa Hayatou, the CAF president. Blatter was vulnerable after the corporate suicide of ISL, the collapse of the Kirch media empire and the cancellation (in the wake of 9/11) of Axa's World Cup insurance. He was even assailed from within by not only half his own executive but also by his own general secretary, Michel Zen-Ruffinen, over allegations of financial mismanagement.

At the Seoul congress, in one of the most remarkable public displays of political skill, Blatter rode some ferocious punches before delivering a knockout blow of world heavyweight title proportions. He then purged FIFA of any elements who were not demonstrably in his corner and set the world federation on a new course.

Danny Jordaan, leader of South Africa's bid to host the 2010 World Cup, summed it up by saying: "Everything that has happened over the last few years has changed FIFA's emphasis. It's had to take all the business management in-house to prevent another ISL or Kirch fiasco. It is not so much a sports association now as a commercial business."

What would those seven founding fathers think of 'their' FIFA today? Perhaps they would consider it significant that the centenary match between France and Brazil in Paris is being played on the evening before the birthday – which is itself being marked by...a meeting.

DIGEST

NEWS AND REPORTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

WS WORLD SOCCER

Decline and fall

Howard Johnson points the finger in the aftermath of Leeds' relegation

ENGLAND

All over...keeper Paul Robinson consoles Alan Smith

THREE YEARS AGO Leeds United were marching on together into the semi-finals of the Champions League and a meeting with Valencia. Their dewy-eyed boss David O'Leary was talking about "my babies" with the pride of a newborn parent. Their fans were cock-a-hoop. Chairman Peter Ridsdale was talking of the club's endless ambition to compete with the European elite.

Today the faces have changed, the company song is very different and the incessant drone comes not from Ridsdale, but rather from pundits analysing how, where and why it all went so wrong that Leeds have crashed out of the Premiership, with the 'fire sale' signs up and the club facing a bleak and uncertain future.

Most of the blame has been dumped at the door of Ridsdale, a modern-day Icarus who flew too close to the sun, with a mad-cap, hair-brained scheme to turn a club hanging out in the backstreets of desperately unfashionable Yorkshire into a footballing superpower.

"How can you buy what you can't afford?" seems to be the endless mantra as pundits mock at the sheer lunacy of paying a plethora of vastly inflated salaries to players that the club clearly couldn't afford. Was Ridsdale blind? Couldn't he see what he was letting Leeds in for?

This, it seems to me, is a bit rich. Given football (and therefore necessarily the living of football writers) is driven by the pursuit of dreams, wasn't Ridsdale simply giving everyone exactly what they wanted? Hocking the club to the eyeballs in the belief that you speculate to accumulate, so why not speculate big?

The media loved it when Leeds marched through the Champions League living the dream. "They've kicked sand in the faces of so many European giants," gushed radio commentator Alan Green at the time.

How they sneered at chairmen without the drive, the vision, the passion of Ridsdale. How Leeds' loud fans, drunk on success, laughed themselves silly at the rest of the also-rans who could only look on in envy at the achievements at Elland Road. How O'Leary looked smug as you please, despite the off-field troubles that were raging around his badly-behaved squad of young upstarts. He even had the temerity to author a book, *Leeds United On Trial*, which many saw as cocking a snook at the seriousness of the assault charges faced by his players Lee Bowyer and Jonathan Woodgate, despite O'Leary's condemnation of the pair in the book.

And now that the whole shooting match has gone and blown up so spectacularly in Leeds' faces it seems there's not a single person out there prepared to look themselves squarely in the eye and admit the truth.

The very first sign that Ridsdale had finally woken up to the financial realities of life at Leeds – the sale of fans' favourite Rio Ferdinand to Manchester United for an inflated £30 million – was greeted with howls of derision and violence of both verbal and other kinds. Was he mad? Maybe you could argue that he was, but flogging Ferdinand was the sanest thing he ever did.

Nobody likes to back a loser, of course, so blaming Ridsdale was the only course of action. In the end it was inevitable that the great dreamer would have to go. But that hasn't satiated a lot of the pundits.

Maybe a bit of traditional Yorkshire pragmatism might have stopped the club falling into the sorry state they find themselves in right now. What on earth are the new board supposed to do other than try to get their wage bill down by selling their most saleable assets? Yes, of course it will be at knockdown prices. But that's what happens when there's a sale on.

I don't see too many of the folk who creamed it off Leeds when everything was hunky dory offering more than platitudes. Is O'Leary waiving the severance money he's still owed after he got the boot? Did any of the club's underperforming players take wage cuts? It seems there were only deferrals. Average local-boy striker Alan Smith might have cried when Leeds got the Premiership bullet. But he'll be crying all the way to the bank and to a new club when someone soft enough to give him another shot at the big time comes along, as they undoubtedly will.

The only real losers are the fans, who will now have to suffer Leeds limping along in a poor division, most likely playing poor-quality football, for some time to come. But even then, let's not forget plenty of those same supporters were gaily lording it over everyone when they were having their day in the sun in Valencia.

It seems everyone knows exactly who is to blame for this whole sorry tale. Funny, isn't it, that it's never them?

Ajax fans attack Feyenoord players

HOLLAND

Targeted...Feyenoord's Jorge Acuna needed hospital treatment after being attacked by Ajax fans

HOOLIGANISM IN HOLLAND has reached new depths after Ajax supporters attacked Feyenoord players and coaching staff at the end of a recent reserve game in Amsterdam.

Chilean midfielder Jorge Acuna needed hospital treatment for concussion and bruising, while coach Mario Been was forced to run for safety when being chased by two men with knives. Arsenal-bound Robin Van Persie was also attacked, but was saved from injury after the intervention of Ajax player Daniel De Ridder and coach John Van 't Schip. "They saved my life," said Van Persie.

Feyenoord have expressed anger that the match was not played at the Amsterdam ArenA but at the nearby youth complex De Toekomst, where security is much laxer. They blame Ajax for neglecting their responsibilities, especially since Feyenoord keeper Zbigniew Malkowski was molested on the same pitch two years ago.

Ajax later apologised and first-team coach Ronald Koeman said the incident has cast a shadow over his side's impending championship triumph. Meanwhile, the club have arranged bodyguards for several of their players for fear of revenge attacks.

There was also fighting at Groningen, but in this case between team-mates. Regillio Vrede and Paul Matthijs came to blows during half-time in a match against Twente, with the tall Vrede accusing Matthijs of ignoring his aerial ability when taking free-kicks. Coach Ron Jans sent both players home, and has since dropped Vrede.

Over at PSV, striker Mateja Kezman turned on keeper Ronald Waterreus for making two blunders at St James' Park during the UEFA Cup quarter-final defeat by Newcastle. "Waterreus makes a mistake in every big match," claimed Kezman. "Despite practising how to deal with corners for the entire week, two goals were scored from corners. When that happens it is clearly a lack of concentration."

Klaas-Jan Droppert

AUSTRIA

Schachner taking sweet revenge

Coach Walter Schachner was surprisingly sacked by Austria Wien in October 2002, with his side leading the League and having just thrashed Shakhtar Donetsk 5-1 in the UEFA Cup. Now revenge is near for the 47-year-old, nicknamed 'Schoko' – chocolate – by his friends.

Schachner led his current team, Grazer AK, to a 3-1 win at defending champions Austria, their nearest challengers, in April to take them a big step nearer a first League title. With two games to go, Grazer were three points clear of Austria.

"It is certainly some sort of delayed gratification, but I am mainly focusing on my team," said Schachner. "We want to win the title for ourselves and not take it away from somebody else."

Grazer even set themselves up to do the Double after beating Second Division SV Ried in the Cup semi-finals. They will meet Austria again in the Final.

FC Wacker Tirol, who were relegated to the Third Division in 2001-02 because of bankruptcy, have won back-to-back promotions and will return to the top flight next season. The club are the reincarnation of FC Tirol, champions in the season they were also relegated.

Harry Miltner

PORTUGAL

Porto chase historic treble

Glory beckons for FC Porto, who are on course for a historic treble. With the League title already wrapped up, the Dragons are also into the Final of the domestic Cup and the Champions League. Benfica, the other Portuguese Cup finalists, as good as clinched runners-up spot in the League by beating Lisbon rivals Sporting 1-0 away in the penultimate round.

Jaime Pacheco has returned to Boavista, whom he led to the League title in 2001. The coach, sacked by Mallorca last September after just three months in charge, replaced Erwin Sanchez, who quit after a 1-1 home draw with relegation-threatened Pacos Ferreira.

Pedro Pinto

● *Champions League Final preview, page 42.*

Waseige quits failing Charleroi

BELGIUM

FORMER BELGIUM COACH Robert Waseige has returned to international management, with Algeria, after failing to deliver at his second domestic club since the 2002 World Cup.

Waseige, under whom Belgium made a gallant second round exit to Brazil in Japan two years ago, quit relegation-threatened Charleroi after the team picked up only one point from a four-game sequence. The previous season he lasted only five games as coach of Standard Liege.

Waseige's departure came by mutual consent when it was discovered his expected successor, Jacky Mathijssen, could leave St Truiden earlier than originally planned.

By taking the Algeria job, Waseige is following a similar path to that taken by his national team predecessor, Georges Leekens, who also coached the north Africans. Leekens is also set to leave his current job, at Mouscron, in the summer.

Sef Vergoossen and assistant Jos Daerden are also looking for new jobs after being told they had no future at Genk, who they led to the League title two seasons ago.

Anderlecht, the champions-elect, secured the title without playing when Luigi Pieroni's 89th-minute penalty for Mouscron earned a 1-1 draw with Club Brugge, ending the latter's faint hopes of retaining their crown.

The Anderlecht players, who faced Lierse next day, marked their success by dying their hair purple, the club's colour. Hugo Broos has now won the League three times as coach (two of them with Brugge) following his four champions' medals as a player (three with Anderlecht, one with Brugge).

Right-back Eric Deflandre, who won his 51st cap in Belgium's 3-2 home defeat by Turkey in April, will join hometown club Standard Liege next season after four years with Lyon.

Nicholas Harling

Purple reign...Anderlecht go for a hair-raising appearance to celebrate their League triumph

Basle's time again

SWITZERLAND

RUNAWAY LEADERS BASLE clinched the championship with four games to spare after beating Thun 2-0 away on May 2. It kept them 13 points clear of Young Boys, who secured runners-up spot with a 1-0 win at Aarau the previous day.

It was the fourth title for coach Christian Gross, who won the League twice with Grasshopper before landing a third in his first season at Basle, 2001-02.

Gross's side maintained their form despite the departure of key forwards Marco Streller and Hakan Yakin to Stuttgart during the winter transfer window and the absence of captain Murat Yakin through injury. However, the coach has acknowledged his team need major strengthening for next season if they are to make any impact in the Champions League. Cameroonian striker Herve Tum may be yet another departee in the summer having failed to agree a new deal.

Veteran international Stephane Chapuisat took his goal tally to 20, putting him in line to win his third Swiss League top scorer crown, after hitting four goals for Young Boys in their 5-1 thrashing of Wil 1900 at the end of April.

There has been more turmoil at Wil after the Football League said it could not allow Czech Tomasz Matejeck to coach them as he did not possess the required licence. German Joachim Muller, who quit after only one match in charge in February, was re-engaged as a stop-gap. Muller originally stepped down citing interference from the club's majority stakeholder, former Soviet international Igor Belanov.

Ivar von Rulach

Master marksman...Stephane Chapuisat

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Champions go clear

Champions Shelbourne were the early pacesetters, opening up a three-point lead over Waterford United after nine rounds.

Waterford's good start showed they had not been distracted by the fact their new director of football, ex-international defender Paul McGrath, went AWOL after just a handful of games.

National team manager Brian Kerr gave Shelbourne striker Jason Byrne and Blackburn midfielder Jonathan Douglas debuts in the 0-0 draw with Poland in Bydgoszcz in late April.

Sean Creedon

LIECHTENSTEIN

Red-faced Andermatt

Martin Andermatt suffered an embarrassing debut as national coach, his new charges losing 1-0 away to San Marino in their late April friendly. The 42-year-old, who remains in charge of leading Liechtenstein club Vaduz, recently agreed to take the reins of the principality's national team for the 2006 World Cup qualifying campaign. He surprisingly omitted experienced defender Patrik Hefti from his inaugural squad.

Graeme Crawford

Captain's lead...Martin Andresen opened the scoring against Russia

Home fans see positive side

NORWAY

THE NATIONAL TEAM displayed their new positive, attacking style to home fans for the first time when beating Euro 2004 finalists Russia 3-2 in Oslo in a late April friendly.

The victory was their sixth from six games under Age Hareide, who has encouraged his new charges to change the ultra-cautious approach adopted by predecessor Nils Johan Semb.

However, Hareide was furious that Norway conceded two goals in the last five minutes against the Russians. "It was totally unnecessary," he stormed. "But my players will have to learn from this and be more tight in similar situations in the future."

Captain Martin Andresen opened the scoring with a fierce shot after 25 minutes, Sigurd Rushfeldt added the second with a pin-point header just before half-time and Jan Gunnar Solli scored Norway's third midway through the second half. Molde midfielder Magne Hoseth had a particularly good game.

In the League, Tromso made a surprisingly good start, beating Viking 4-0 at home in the opening match and following up with wins against Lillestrom and Stabaek.

The Viking players turned on coach Kjell Inge Olsen after that opening day defeat, complaining to the press that his training sessions lacked "intensity". Olsen duly asked to be released from his contract having clearly lost the trust of his players. Viking director Bjarne Berntsen, who has coached the team in the past, has taken over on a temporary basis.

Sigurd Odegaard

DENMARK

Allan key to shock draw

Former Danish international Allan Nielsen made an immediate impact as a manager when he inspired little Herfolge to a 1-1 draw away to FC Copenhagen that prevented the home team going clear in the League.

Nielsen, who played in England for Tottenham and Watford, had been appointed only a few days earlier following the sudden departure of Johnny Petersen. He left himself out of the struggling team and watched from the sidelines as Herfolge conjured up a shock in front of a 22,000 crowd.

The draw allowed Esbjerg, 5-2 winners at AB Copenhagen, to regain pole position with five rounds remaining, while previous leaders Brondby suffered a 3-2 defeat at Viborg.

Fourth-placed OB Odense are facing an inquiry after FC Copenhagen keeper Magnus Kihlstedt was hit by a missile thrown from the crowd during OB's 4-0 home defeat on May 1.

Jim Holden

SWEDEN

Money spent at AIK

AIK Stockholm coach Richard Money has quit with the new season just a few weeks old. Although the clouds had been gathering over the Englishman for some time, the timing of his departure still came as a surprise.

"I am resigning over a matter of principle," said Money, a former Fulham and Liverpool defender. "The club have decided to start using a 4-3-3 system, whereas I am a 4-4-2 man. I have enjoyed my time here and I believe that I have a good rapport with the players. But I must have total belief in what I am doing."

Money, who was beginning his second season at AIK, has been replaced by Patrick Englund. Both he and assistant Nebjosa Novakovic are former favourites at the Stockholm club.

AIK have been on the slide since winning the championship under Stuart Baxter in 1998. Now, they are only third in the capital pecking order, behind current champions Djurgardens and Hammarby.

The saga of whether or not Henrik Larsson would participate at Euro 2004 had a happy ending after the Celtic forward finally yielded to public demand. A press-led petition that aimed to lure Larsson back into the fold attracted 100,000 signatories, including Sports Minister Mona Sahlin.

"We don't want to speculate about what effect Henrik's return will have on our results in Portugal," said national team co-coach Lars Lagerback. "We're just happy to welcome him back. He is still a great player to have around."

Larsson has scored 24 goals in 73 international appearances to date.

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

Improvement in Riga

The ring-rusty national side followed up on their lacklustre 2-1 defeat in Albania in March with a much-improved showing against Latvia in Riga. The 0-0 draw with the surprise Euro 2004 qualifiers was achieved despite Iceland missing key players.

The next challenge facing coaching duo Asgeir Sigurvinsson and Logi Olafsson is a trip to Manchester in June to face England and Japan in a three-nation tournament.

At club level, champions KR became the first Icelandic team in three outings to lose to Faroese opposition in the Atlantic Cup. The injury-weakened west Reykjavik side went down 3-1 to HB in Torshavn. However, KR made up for the disappointment a week later by claiming a place in the League Cup Final. They will meet FH, who disposed of holders IA in a comfortable 2-0 semi-final win.

Rab Christie

WALES

Rhyl romp to Treble

Rhyl completed a magnificent Treble as they cleaned up the Welsh silverware. The North Wales part-timers won the League for the first time, winning 2-0 at Porthmadog in their final game to pip Total Network Solutions, long-time leaders earlier in the campaign, by a point.

Rhyl went on to win the Challenge (League) Cup, beating Carmarthen Town 4-0 in the Final, and then denied TNS for a second time by defeating them 1-0 in the Welsh Cup Final. Marc Limbert scored the goal a minute into extra-time.

Haverfordwest County clinched third place and a UEFA Cup slot because the top two both reached the Cup Final. It is some achievement for a club who only just avoided the drop last term.

Last season's champions Barry Town were relegated after spending the entire campaign in financial crisis. Airbus UK and Llanelli are the two promoted sides, as the top flight expands to 18 clubs from 17.

Mel Thomas

NORTHERN IRELAND

Results starting to come

The stock of national team manager Lawrie Sanchez continued to rise after encouraging results in recent friendlies. Northern Ireland recorded their first win in 16 games and over two years when beating Estonia in Tallinn in late March thanks to a superb 22-yard drive from David Healy. Four weeks later Sanchez's side held Serbia & Montenegro to a 1-1 draw in Belfast. This time Healy was the provider for James Quinn, playing his first game for a year.

Linfield duly won the League title, their 45th in all, but a game Portadown took the race right down to the final day. In fact, Linfield went a goal down at home to arch-rivals Glentoran in the last game, before hitting back to win 2-1.

Glenavon were relegated, ending their 93-year stay in the top flight. Their replacements are Loughgall, also from County Armagh. Cliftonville stayed up after beating First Division runners-up Armagh City 4-1 on aggregate in the relegation/promotion play-off.

Glentoran reversed last season's Irish Cup Final result in beating Coleraine 1-0. Michael Halliday scored the goal in what was a lacklustre game.

Roy Kitson

Turf luck for Euro-bound Pars

SCOTLAND

DUNFERMLINE WILL RETURN to European action next season after nearly 35 years having reached the Scottish Cup Final. The irony is the Pars may not be able to stage UEFA Cup ties at their home, East End Park, after agreeing to take part in UEFA's artificial pitch experiment. UEFA forbids competitive continental games to be played on anything other than grass, though they have added a proviso that such games can go ahead if a visiting team agrees.

Dunfermline are guaranteed European football regardless of the outcome of the Final, since their opponents, Celtic, will be in the Champions League. They sealed the League title with six games to spare, thus giving them the chance to offer young fringe players first-team experience. Teenage striker Aiden McGeady (see profile, page 73) made the most dynamic impact, scoring on his debut against Hearts. However, though Glasgow-born, he has pledged his international allegiance to the Republic of Ireland, where his grandfather was born.

Scotland's most recent defeat – 1-0 to Denmark in a friendly in Copenhagen – suggested that they are in dire need of players of McGeady's potential.

Alan Fairley

Home ban?...Dunfermline's pitch may not stage UEFA Cup ties

Got the shirt...Litmanen

Jari home with Lahti

FINLAND

JARI LITMANEN, the country's best-known player and record international scorer, has returned home after 12 years.

The 33-year-old, who has joined FC Lahti, had his contract with Ajax terminated by mutual consent because of his constant struggle with injuries.

However, many people believe Litmanen is only back to gain match practice in the relatively easy-going Finnish game before making one final move to a foreign club in the summer.

He says: "I have promised to help Finland in the 2006 World Cup qualifiers. I don't want to look beyond that."

Litmanen was on the losing side in the League Cup Final, in which he appeared as a substitute. Alliansi won on penalties after a 2-2 draw.

HJK Helsinki are firm favourites to retain the League title, despite the likely loss of midfield star Alexei Eremenko Jnr to Hamburg. The youngster continues to make headlines of the wrong sort, however. He had a bust-up with coach Keith Armstrong at half-time in a pre-season friendly after being accused of lacking concentration.

Pentti Hietanen

Government intervenes after corruption claims

TURKEY

Allegations...Besiktas coach Mircea Lucescu has claimed opposition clubs were paid incentive money to beat his side

THE FINAL WEEKS of the season have been marked by a cacophony of claims about match-fixing, incentive payments and alleged bias. As Fenerbahce emerged as champions, seeing off the challenge of Trabzonspor, one journalist wrote that the League had not had a 'clean' winner for at least 10 years, while the federation was accused of favouring certain clubs.

The allegations prompted Sports Minister Mehmet Ali Sahin to call an emergency meeting of top club officials and federation chief Haluk Ulusoy. This produced a declaration condemning incentive payments to players by interested third parties as "immoral" and promising that club officials will refrain from slandering referees. However, it is far from certain this goes far enough to lift the cloud hanging over the domestic game.

Besiktas coach Mircea Lucescu has been at the forefront of those making allegations of skulduggery, as his side – the League leaders by nine points at the winter break – have suffered a spectacular fall from grace.

As the Black Eagles were reduced to scrabbling around for even a UEFA Cup place, Lucescu became increasingly shrill, proclaiming in interviews with reporters from his own country, Romania, that Turkish football was about as transparent as Ceausescu's Communist regime in his homeland. Earlier, when Besiktas were still top, the coach claimed that opposition clubs were being paid huge sums as incentive payments by third parties to upset the Black Eagles' championship bid.

At the start of May, Besiktas were 11 points behind Fenerbahce in third place. Besiktas chairman Serdar Bilgili has now stood down, the final straw coming when his family, sitting in a VIP box, were verbally abused during a recent game.

In a twist to the corruption furore, Caykur Rizespor coach Yilmaz Vural walked out on his job just before half-time of a game, declaring that his own players were suspiciously underperforming.

Trabzonspor's consolation for losing out in the League race was to win the Cup, beating Genclerbirligi 4-0 in the Final.

Suna Erdem

GREECE

Licence threat to clubs in debt

The government has again warned professional soccer clubs to settle their debts or face the loss of their operating licences.

AEK Athens, Aris Salonika and PAOK Salonika are among the 13 professional outfits deemed to have dangerously high debts and an inadequate capital base.

Seven Olympiakos hooligans and a coach driver have been jailed for a total of over 62 years for abducting and torturing a Panathinaikos fan, whom they abandoned a few hours later naked and shorn on a motorway. The incident occurred in May 1999 after a match between the two clubs.

Lou Economopoulos

SLOVENIA

Prasnikar pays the price

Bojan Prasnikar has finally been ousted as national coach, having been under pressure ever since Slovenia lost to Croatia in the Euro 2004 play-offs.

A number of poor friendly results since then brought support to the view of federation president Rudi Zavri that Prasnikar had to go.

The coach was hamstrung by the fact that Zlatko Zahovic, Slovenia's leading player, performed poorly this season, yet Prasnikar felt unable to drop him because of his status in the side.

The new coach is expected to be current Under-21 boss Brane Oblak, the best and most popular Slovenian player of all time.

Zdravko Reic

CROATIA

Stimac suspended after hitting linesman

Hajduk Split sporting director Igor Stimac, the ex-international defender, has been banned from holding the post for six months after hitting a linesman during half-time of a League game away to Rijeka.

There was further turmoil at Hajduk when coach Zoran Vulic was fired after the club lost 3-1 away to arch-rivals Dinamo Zagreb. The defeat meant Dinamo leapfrogged Hajduk to the top of the table on goal difference.

Peter Nadoveza took charge of Hajduk for the fourth time to guide them through their last three games.

Rijeka was the setting for another controversy, when the referee for their Cup semi-final second leg against Dinamo denied the home side what appeared to be a cast-iron penalty appeal. Rijeka were leading 1-0 at the time (4-3 behind on aggregate) and Dinamo clung on to reach the Final.

Croatia won their Euro 2004 warm-up away to Macedonia, 1-0, but the performance was far from convincing.

Zdravko Reic

MACEDONIA

Vardar turn to Brazilian

Gildo Rodriguez has become the first Brazilian to coach a Macedonian club after taking charge of defending champions Vardar Skopje. The 62-year-old former Corinthians and Vasco da Gama boss replaced Zoran Stratev, who stepped down after Vardar slipped from top spot to fourth in the League.

The national team were beaten 1-0 at home in their April friendly against Croatia. The game, in Skopje, was the farewell appearance of striker Sasa Ciric, who played 26 times for the team.

Four weeks earlier, Macedonia had beaten Ukraine 1-0, also in Skopje, Goran Stavrevski scoring the winner. The visitors' star player, Andrii Shevchenko, caused controversy by leaving the pitch after the referee did not punish a tackle on him.

Michel Stojmanovski

MALTA

Sliema keep their crown

Sliema Wanderers claimed the League crown for the second year running after nearest challengers Birkirkara were held to a 1-1 draw at Pieta Hotspurs in the penultimate round of the title play-offs.

The champions celebrated the next day by beating Hibernians 3-1 at home. League top scorer Danilo Doncic scored one of the goals, taking his tally to 19.

Domenico Aquilina

ISRAEL

UEFA grants home comforts

Israeli clubs and the national team can once again meet foreign opponents on home soil after UEFA decided to lift its ban of two years' standing. The order to play 'home' games in neutral countries was made in March 2002 in light of security concerns stemming from the conflict with the Palestinians. The ban was lifted following a positive report from a UEFA commission that visited Israel to review the situation.

The ruling states that initially matches against European opposition can be played only in the Tel Aviv area.

Israel celebrated their homecoming with a friendly against Moldova in Tel Aviv, but the disappointing 1-1 draw dampened the spirits of the home fans.

Maccabi Haifa won the League for the third time in four seasons after going out of reach of nearest challengers Maccabi Tel Aviv with three games left.

Ahi Nazareth, one of two Arab clubs promoted last season, were relegated as Haifa beat them 3-1 to secure the title. The other Arab club, Bnei Sakhnin, have had better fortunes, reaching the State Cup Final. It is the first time an Arab club have gone this far in the competition.

Ori Lewis

Quit while he's winning...Mirsad Hibic bids goodbye

Hibic enjoys farewell win

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

CAPTAIN MIRSAD HIBIC enjoyed a winning end to his international career, as Bosnia-Herzegovina beat Finland 1-0 in April. The friendly was played in Zenica, Hibic's home town.

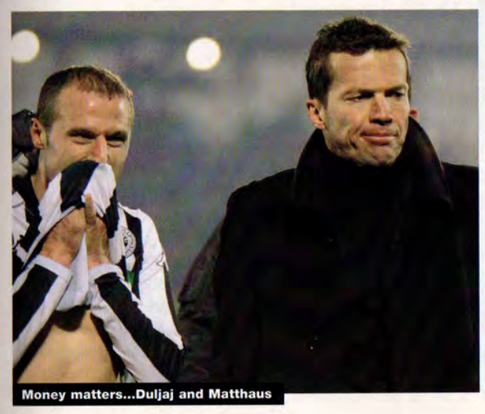
The defender has given no reason for his international retirement, given his relatively young age of 30. So his decision has added fuel to the rumours that he is suffering heart problems.

Zvjezdan Muslimovic scored the winner in the 88th minute, while Predrag Simic, 25, won his first cap for Bosnia.

In the League, Siroki Brijeg were on course to take their first title, standing nine points clear with five games left. Meanwhile, three-times champions Brotnjo have been relegated after taking only 19 points from 25 matches.

Zdravko Reic

Matthaus takes Partizan to task



Money matters...Duljaj and Matthaus

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

LOTHAR MATTHAUS HAS launched legal proceedings against Partizan Belgrade, claiming they have failed to honour a deal he signed with the club when coach.

The former Germany midfielder, who quit Partizan in December, has accused the club of failing to pay his sports marketing agency, Sport House, the agreed 15 per cent commission on the £2.7million received for midfielder Igor Duljaj from Shakhtar Donetsk in the winter. According to Matthaus, now Hungary coach, the Duljaj deal was set up because Partizan could not meet his original wage demands.

Partizan claim they owe Matthaus nothing, saying Sport House was not involved in the transfer.

Red Star Belgrade won the League as expected and kept themselves on course for the Double when beating Partizan 1-0 in the Cup semi-finals. In the Final they will meet lowly top division village side Buducnost Banatski Dvor, who defeated Obilic Belgrade 2-1 in the other semi.

The national team were held to a 1-1 draw in their April friendly away to Northern Ireland, another poor result given that their opponents are one of the weakest sides in Europe.

Vladimir Novak

Yartsev suffering back problems

RUSSIA

DEFENSIVE BLUNDERS PLAGUED the national team as they lost their April friendly 3-2 away to Norway, the penultimate warm-up game for Euro 2004. In fact the margin of defeat looked as if it would be much greater until Georgi Yartsev's side grabbed two late goals to avoid total humiliation.

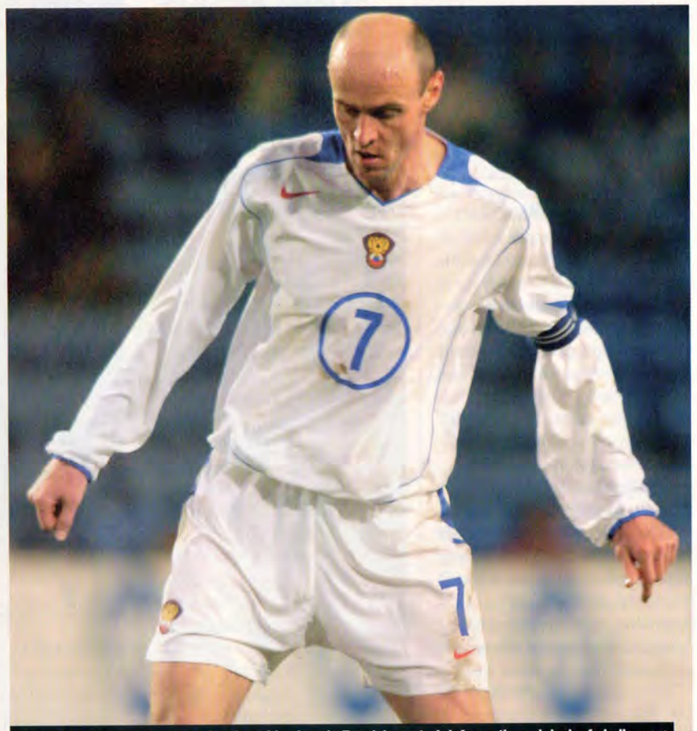
Even so, 18-year-old CSKA Moscow goalkeeper Igor Akinfeev will surely remember his debut as a nightmare.

Unfortunately for Yartsev and Russia, the coach has little choice when it comes to defenders since the top domestic clubs use mostly foreigners in those positions. As a result, 34-year-old Victor Onopko, now with Saturn Ramenskoye, has few serious rivals for his national team place. Similarly, CSKA's Sergei Ignashevich, another central defender, knows he will also be in the starting frame in Portugal despite loss of form after a winter transfer from city rivals Lokomotiv.

Torpedo Moscow were the surprise leaders in the League at the start of May, lying three points clear of Zenit St Petersburg after nine games and the only side unbeaten. The key to their rise is their sparkling form at home – the Luzhniki stadium – which has artificial turf. Torpedo dropped only two points in their first five home games as their visitors struggled to adjust to the surface.

CSKA and Lokomotiv were unexpectedly knocked out of the Cup at the quarter-finals stage. There will be a new name on the trophy this year as none of the semi-finalists – Kryliya Sovetov, Shinnik Yaroslavl, Torpedo-Metallurg (who will soon be renamed FC Moscow) and Second Division Terek from Grozny – have won the Cup before.

Victor Gusev



Ploughing on...Onopko, at 34, has kept his place in Russia's central defence through lack of challengers

It's there somewhere...Hungary's Zoltan Gera tussles for a cross in the friendly against Brazil

Beaten but not bowed

HUNGARY

THE NATIONAL TEAM lost 4-1 to Brazil in their April friendly in Budapest, though they matched the world champions for long periods. The game, which marked the 50th anniversary of the infamous 'Battle of Berne' World Cup quarter-final between the countries, was much anticipated in Hungary, with 30,000 fans turning up just to watch Roberto Carlos and co train.

In the League, Ferencvaros were thrashed 4-0 away by a rampant Balaton then lost 1-0 at home to bitter rivals Ujpest to lose top spot. Debrecen and Balaton, this year's surprise package, both went above 'Fradi' on goal difference with six games remaining.

Ferencvaros took some consolation by winning the Hungarian Cup, beating Kispest-Honved 3-1 in the Final.

Peterjon Cresswell

POLAND

Goals dry up

Nigeria-born striker Emmanuel Olisadebe returned to the international fold in late April after a year's absence because of injury, but failed to show his true form during a dismal, boring 0-0 draw with the Republic of Ireland. Coach Pawel Janas introduced a 4-5-1 system for the friendly in Bydgoszcz in an attempt to make his midfield more effective. But his side produced barely any scoring opportunities.

Four weeks earlier, the national team's seven-game winning run was ended by the United States, 1-0, in a friendly in Plock. Before the game the stadium was officially christened the 'Kazimierz Gorski' in honour of Poland's greatest coach. Gorski, now 83, led Poland to their third-place finish at the 1974 World Cup, to Olympic gold in 1972 and silver four years later.

Amica Wronki have terminated the contract of international goalkeeper Grzegorz Szamotulski following a row with coach Stefan Majewski. Team-mates backed their colleague by wearing T-shirts bearing the slogan 'We are with you, Szamo' during their next game.

Groclin players took similar action after top scorer Grzegorz Rasiak was dropped from the squad having said he would not extend his contract in June. But their T-shirts, reading 'We are with you, Rossi' – Rasiak's nickname – did not impress chairman and club owner Zbigniew Drzymala, who released the striker with immediate effect. Drzymala also docked the rest of the squad's wages, an act mirrored by Amica.

Wisla Krakow closed in on the League title after beating closest rivals Legia Warsaw 1-0 at home in mid-April.

Dariusz Kurowski

CZECH REPUBLIC

Scandal clouds Ostrava triumph

Banik Ostrava clinched the League championship on May 2 when a 1-0 win at Sigma Olomouc put them eight points clear of closest challengers and defending champions Sparta Prague with only two games remaining.

However, bribery allegations relating to Sparta's 2-0 defeat at mid-table Synot at the end of March cast a shadow over the end of the season.

The police apprehended a Synot director, Jaroslav Hastik, and assistant referee Stanislav Hruska at a remote service station near Brno. Hastik was carrying 175,000 Czech crowns (£3,655) in cash, and according to police, who had been investigating the pair for some time, intended to pay the money to Hruska in return for him having influenced the Sparta result.

The Czech FA has launched an investigation, and if it decides to act against Synot, could award Sparta a walkover win or even expel Synot from the First Division and cancel all their results this season. Either eventuality would have a bearing on the situation at the top of the table.

Various theories have been put forward about why Synot might have wanted to bribe Hruska. One suggestion is that representatives of one of Sparta's main title rivals – Ostrava, Slavia or Olomouc – were pulling the strings.

The Czech game has been hit by two other bribery scandals. In March, the *Plzensky denik* newspaper reported that two Viktoria Plzen players, Martin Svejnoha and captain Milan Barteska, had been caught on video by police taking money for throwing their home game against Ostrava, who won 2-1.

The matter died, however, when Plzen police denied the tape existed. Angry Ostrava fans pointed to the fact that *Plzensky denik* is owned by Vltava-Labe-Press, which also owns Sparta Prague, as evidence of a smear campaign.

In April, assistant referee Petr Kasny was banned for life and referee Josef Dvoracek until the end of the season after they made key errors in a game between Sparta and Viktoria Zizkov, which Sparta won 3-1, scoring twice from dubious penalties.

Sam Beckwith

SLOVAKIA

Zilina zoom up

Defending champions MSK Zilina have mounted a late title charge under new coach Ladislav Jurkemik, closing the gap on leaders Banska Bystrica to two points with eight games remaining.

Zilina won four of their first five games under the former national team coach, who was brought in to replace Juraj Simurka in late March.

There have been two other top-flight coaching changes. Vladimir Weiss walked out on lowly Artmedia Petrzalka after claiming he felt "powerless" at a club where he believed there was not enough ambition. Petrzalka began the season as one of the favourites for the title after finishing runners-up last term. Meanwhile, second bottom Puchov brought in former Zilina boss Milan Lesicky to replace Stefan Zatko.

Jozef Adamec remains coach of basement club Slovan Bratislava, but has threatened to dock players' wages citing a lack of application. He claimed some of his charges were "just standing around during matches".

Ed Holt

ROMANIA

Iordanescu plays political football

Romania coach Anghel Iordanescu, who is running for a place on a county council as a member of the Social Democratic party, has come in for strong criticism after shouting: "Love the Social Democratic party as well as the national team!" at a recent electoral meeting.

The pronouncement was condemned by observers, who felt Iordanescu was exploiting his position to further his political ends. The coach is in the running for a place on the council of Ilfov county, which surrounds Bucharest, in June elections.

Iordanescu is just one of the many figures in Romanian football who have recently entered the political fray. Former national coach Mircea Lucescu, now in charge of Besiktas in Turkey, made a lightning visit to Bucharest to support the candidature of Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana for a place at city hall; Professional League president Dumitru Dragomir is also a candidate for the Bucharest council; and Steaua Bucharest owner Gigi Becali recently became involved with the tiny New Generation political party and is now running for the Romanian Senate.

Radu Timofte

BULGARIA

Lokomotiv steam to title

Long-time leaders Lokomotiv Plovdiv clinched the League championship for the first time after beating Slavia Sofia 3-2 at home. They were five points clear of Levski Sofia with just one game to go.

Dimitar Dimitrov was fired as coach of mid-table Naftex Burgas following a 2-1 home defeat by Lokomotiv in the previous round. Dimitrov, a former national coach, joined the club from Lokomotiv last summer and previously won the League title with both Litex Lovech and Levski Sofia.

Michael Bowesfield

GEORGIA

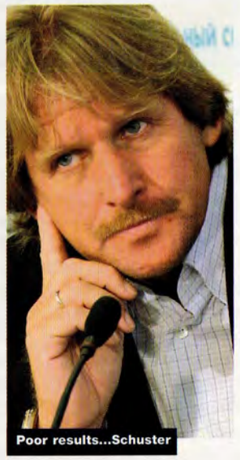
Giresse handed reins

Former France midfielder Alain Giresse has been appointed to lead the national team during the 2006 World Cup qualifying campaign after Anatoliy Byshovets failed to agree a contract.

Byshovets, who has led Russia in the past, met Georgian FA president Merab Zhordania in Cyprus with the intention of sealing the post, but the deal fell through at the final hurdle. Giresse said 'yes' two weeks later.

Vladimir Kalinkovich

Schuster fired by Shakhtar



Poor results...Schuster

UKRAINE

SHAKHTAR DONETSK president Rinat Akhmetov fired German coach Bernd Schuster after a string of poor performances since the turn of the year.

Shakhtar were nine points behind arch-rivals and leaders Kyiv Dynamo at the start of May, having gone into the winter break three points ahead.

The club's sports director, Victor Prokopenko, a previous head coach, has taken the reins on a caretaker basis.

Bottom-of-the-table Zirka Kirovohrad have been docked three points for failing to pay wages to player Alexy Deripapa.

Vladimir Lozinskyi, coach of fellow strugglers Vorskla, has suffered a heart attack.

Oleg Zadernovsky

Boca on top

ARGENTINA

Up where we belong...Guillermo Barros Schelotto celebrates another Boca goal

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS Boca Juniors are clear favourites to also carry off the closing title after seeing off surprise early leaders Talleres.

Boca inflicted the first defeat of the campaign on the Cordoba club – 3-1 in the eighth round – and had moved to the top, two points clear of eternal rivals River Plate after 12 of the 19 games.

"Boca have by far the best squad and the best coaching staff," says Carlos Ischia, boss of fifth-placed Velez Sarsfield. "Perhaps they don't play spectacular soccer, but they win."

Lanus player Gabriel Iribarren concurs, saying: "Boca mix you up, they make you commit mistakes. They pressure you in such a way that they don't let you hang on to the ball. They are the best."

Boca's involvement in the knockout stages of the Libertadores Cup means there has been a risk of fatigue, but coach Carlos Bianchi is proving a master at shuffling his pack. The strength of the squad is also apparent, with the attack, for example, able to function well by perming any two of the five forwards – Antonio Barijho, Guillermo Barros Schelotto, Franco Cangele, Iarley and Carlos Tevez.

Bianchi says: "We can count on a much stronger squad than in the past, so that the team's standard does not drop in spite of changes. And there are also a lot of talented youngsters, who make good use of the chance of playing with seasoned professionals."

San Lorenzo striker Daniel Cordone has been banned for two years after failing a drugs test for the second time this season. He is the first player to be punished under the FA's new, stricter rules relating to such offences.

Independiente's Carlos Navarro Montoya has been hailed as the League's best keeper this season, with some fans saying he should receive a national team call-up.

The 37-year-old was born in Colombia and played for that country briefly. He was first choice at Boca for several years, during which time he tried vainly to allow FIFA to let him play for Argentina. By the time he did obtain permission, it was thought to be too late for him to make it at international level but his recent form has staked his claim once more.

Faustino Asprilla, another, more controversial ex-Colombia international, has terminated his contract with Estudiantes de La Plata after playing in only two matches. He failed to shine in either game, and also managed to get himself into disciplinary trouble.

Eric Weil

Three go through

MEXICO

JAGUARES, PUMAS UNAM and Guadalajara were the only three teams assured of play-off places with two rounds of the closing championship group stage to go.

Jaguares have an intelligent, down-to-earth strategist in coach Jose Luis Trejo, but while his team are highly motivated they may not have the strength in depth to go all the way in the title campaign. Pumas have the best scoring record, though they have repeatedly had to come from behind after conceding early goals. Guadalajara are prone to defensive mistakes, although they compensate with their rapid counter-attacking.

Star-studded Cruz Azul, spearheaded by veteran Argentina midfielder Marcelo Delgado and now under sharp coach Luis Fernando Tena, have come right back into contention for a last-eight place after a horrible start under Enrique Meza. Delgado has not only taken the playmaker's role but has also scored almost half the team's goals.

The national team's lack of a consistent scorer was again exposed when they were beaten 1-0 by the United States in an April friendly in Dallas.

Carlos Ramirez

Pulling the strings...Cruz Azul's Marcelo Delgado

ROUND-UP

● URUGUAY coach Juan Ramon Carrasco and his BOLIVIA counterpart, Nelson Acosta, lost their jobs in the wake of home World Cup qualifying defeats in March. Carrasco, who had introduced a much more attacking style to Uruguay's play, bit the dust after his side were beaten 3-0 by Venezuela. Bolivia's 2-0 loss to Chile left them bottom of the South American qualifying table, with three points from five games.

Jorge Fossati has replaced Carrasco, joining from Ecuadorean League leaders LDU Quito. Former Bolivian international Ramiro Blacutt has succeeded Acosta.

Small clubs made the early running in the Uruguayan classification stage, with Danubio, Cerrito and Liverpool filling the top three places, all unbeaten, after eight rounds. Cerrito are the biggest revelation, in what is their first year in the top flight. The club have only 400 members and are currently sharing the stadium of Second Division Villa Espanola since they do not have one of their own.

Bolivar continue to lead the Bolivian opening championship by some margin despite internal divisions because of unpaid wages. The unrest has led to the departure of veteran international Marco Etcheverry, Chilean coach Gustavo Huerta and three other players.

Shown the door...Uruguay's Juan Ramon Carrasco

● PERU: Former national team defender Hector Chumpitaz has been freed from house arrest in Lima after more than two years. Nevertheless, he is still awaiting trial, accused of illegally receiving £16,700 from former intelligence chief Vladimiro Montesinos. Chumpitaz says the money was to fund his election campaign to become a municipal councillor.

Defending champions Alianza Lima were six points clear in the opening championship and still unbeaten after 12 games.

● ECUADOR: LDU Quito shrugged off the departure of Uruguayan coach Jorge Fossati by staying top in the opening championship and reaching the knockout stages of the Libertadores Cup. Fossati, now leading the Uruguayan national team, has been replaced by compatriot Daniel Careno. Daniel Cordoba, Deportivo Cuenca's Argentinian coach, has been suspended for six months for making an insulting gesture to a referee.

● CHILE: Colo Colo, the country's most popular club, have been declared bankrupt again after paying less than five per cent of a £19million debt since they came out of their previous bankruptcy in May 2003. Colo Colo now face losing their stadium, as well as other assets. Meanwhile, the club's former president, Peter Dragicevic, has been jailed for failing to pay taxes and players' salaries between 1997 and 2000.

Another leading club, Universidad de Chile, have avoided bankruptcy after a court ruled they had enough capital to guarantee payment of a £5m tax debt.

Universidad Catolica, the country's third big club, faced missing out on qualification for the opening championship play-offs after taking only 16 points from their first 15 games in the group stage. Replacing Argentinian coach Oscar Garre with Jorge Pellizer has made little difference.

● PARAGUAY: Defending champions Libertad have replaced coach Victor Genes with Argentinian Juan Manuel Llop after a poor showing in the Libertadores Cup. However, the side were joint top of the opening championship, with Cerro Porteno, after 12 rounds. Olimpia have also changed coach – former international Carlos Kiese is now in charge, in place of Uruguayan Luis Cubilla, who remains as an adviser.

● COLOMBIA: Once Caldas paid the price for selling leading scorer Sergio Galvan Rey to the United States' MLS by losing the opening championship lead to America of Cali. Quindio coach Diego Umana has resigned with his team second bottom because he says the players were coming to training hungry as the club have not been paying them enough to allow them to eat properly.

Eric Weil

Bigger is better

LIBERTADORES CUP

NEWLY EXPANDED FROM 32 to 36 teams, the Libertadores Cup was whittled down to 16 during an entertaining three-month group phase.

Until the present decade 24 teams competed for the 16 knockout stage berths, making the group phase a laborious affair that only got rid of the deadwood. This is emphatically no longer the case. The Libertadores is now truly competitive right from the start.

Some big names and former champions have already fallen by the wayside, and only four sides made it through their group games unbeaten. There was also an excellent average of nearly 2.8 goals per game, though perhaps this year the quality of the football has not been matched by the organisation.

In 2005 the Libertadores will grow still further, to 38 teams. Twelve will take part in a preliminary round for a place in the group phase of 32. That is likely to prove better than this year's experiment with 36 teams, an unwieldy number that gave the format of the tournament an unsatisfactory look.

The need to produce 16 qualifiers from nine groups was a challenge to the ingenuity of the administrators. It was decided that the group winners plus the five best runners-up would go through, with the other runners-up fighting it out for the remaining two places in two-leg play-offs – a convoluted arrangement that thankfully need not be repeated.

But at least the increase in the numbers this year meant an automatic place for teams from Mexico and Venezuela. The Mexicans have been invited to participate since 1998, but until this year had to play-off against Venezuela's finest for the right to enter the tournament proper.

In this, the Mexicans were almost always successful. Indeed, they have proved much stronger than was imagined when the invitation was first made. The relative strength of the Mexican economy means the country can hang on to its stars and also import good players and coaches.

This year Santos Laguna and America gave a show of strength in the group phase. The former were unbeaten and the latter, coached by veteran Dutchman Leo Beenhakker, lost only their last game, for which they fielded a reserve side having already qualified.

Having to overcome the Mexicans to get into the competition was an unfair obstacle to the development of Venezuelan football. It was depriving their players of top-level club competition. Freed of this impediment the country's three representatives took full advantage and were the revelations of the group stage.

Even in its darkest days Venezuelan football could provide flashes of talent, but self-belief and organisation were in short supply. No longer. Deportivo Tachira made it through their group unbeaten; Union Maracaibo fell at the last – losing heavily to Barcelona of Ecuador in one of the play-offs for a second-round place – but humbled Argentina's Velez Sarsfield during the group stage proper; and Caracas produced moments to be proud of before finishing third in a difficult group.

Peruvian clubs also showed an upward trend. Only Sporting Cristal qualified, but Alianza Lima and Cienciano were never less than competitive. It was a marked improvement on recent years.

At the other end of the scale, there was an early exit for all the teams from Chile, Bolivia and, more surprisingly, Paraguay. Chilean football is deep in crisis, and the Bolivians have little on their side except home advantage. As for the Paraguayans, Olimpia have been on the slide since winning the Libertadores in 2002, and the new force of Libertad have not yet been able to reproduce domestic success in the international arena.

But even those sides already eliminated featured some individual success stories. As ever, the tournament is helping young talent on its way. There were five goals for Carlos Bueno of Penarol and Jose Alfredo Castillo of Bolivar. Oswaldo Diaz (Guarani), Jefferson Farfan (Alianza Lima) and Felix Borja (El Nacional) all hit four.

As for the remainder of the tournament, the two halves of the draw look uneven. In the toughest half are the two Mexican teams, Argentinian giants Boca Juniors and River Plate plus Brazil's Double winners Cruzeiro and the dangerous Sao Caetano – a collection that offers no one an easy ride to the Final.

Tim Vickery

Out of my way...Union Maracaibo (in red) saw off Velez Sarsfield before losing in the play-offs

Much Adu about nothing...Freddy made an undistinguished start for DC United against San Jose Earthquakes

Freddy-frenzy – but few results

USA

FREDDY ADU, all of 14 years old, has created most of the excitement at the beginning of the ninth MLS season. Not so much by what he has done on the pitch, which isn't a great deal, but by the way his image has fascinated Americans as a human interest story. All Americans, that is, not just the soccer community.

It is tempting to regard the Adu phenomenon as the missing link, the long-sought-after key that would mark the unquestionable arrival of soccer among the elite of American pro sports.

But it's hardly that. There is simply no way that the smiling Freddy can live up to his feverish billing. Inevitably, a sense of let-down is growing.

MLS commissioner Don Garber says that, in Adu, the League "has a tiger by the tail" and appears to be surprised by all the fuss, adding "once the media and the general public got hold of him, it turned into one of the year's biggest general interest stories".

It is a difficult situation for MLS, as it tries – genuinely, I believe – to act as protector of the vulnerable youngster while at the same time trying to exploit the publicity he generates.

That publicity can be measured in the most basic way – ticket sales. When Adu's club, DC United, opened their season the crowd was 24,603, and the DC management felt so confident about Adu's long-term drawing power that they deliberately closed off the top ring of the stadium to create a 'scarcity' factor among ticket buyers.

All this for Adu's very first game, with no guarantee he would even get on the pitch. But the cynics knew Adu had to play. Journalists from all over the country were at the game, which was televised nationally by ABC. Adu wouldn't play? Unthinkable.

So, to a huge cheer, Adu came on 15 minutes into the second half – and did nothing. What did happen was that DC United, who were leading San Jose Earthquakes 2-1 and dominating the game, immediately lost their rhythm and struggled to hold on for the win. DC coach Peter Nowak denied the substitution was made for publicity rather than soccer reasons, claiming that the player Adu replaced, Alecko Eskandarian, was tiring.

When DC United played at MetroStars' Giants stadium two weeks later, the crowd was 31,419, double MetroStars' 2003 average of 15,000. In fact, DC United's away games were averaging over 25,000 fans, nearly 10,000 more than any other team.

Against MetroStars, Adu was again a second-half substitute, but we did get to see his first professional goal. Later, the teenager, already at ease in crowded press conferences, said: "It taught me something about myself. First of all, I can really do this. Secondly, I'm a fighter."

In that heady atmosphere, Adu rashly added he hoped his goal would "open the floodgates". The fact that DC had lost the game was not discussed.

The expected Freddy fireworks continued to not happen. TV ratings (how closely the MLS bigwigs follow those figures) went up 30 per cent when Adu played. But there arose the awful thought that millions of these potential fans would quickly find out that Adu was sitting on the bench and switch channels, perhaps never to return.

Sports Illustrated said: "Serious soccer fans have no problem with Adu's limited action. That's fine if the sport is content with appealing only to the serious soccer fan. If the League wants to be anything more than a niche sport in this country, it has to satisfy the curiosity of the rest of us."

Adu soon graduated to a starting spot. "He's earned it," said Nowak, but the evidence was not convincing.

There were those who thought Adu was being given special treatment. Chicago Fire defender C J Brown was one, saying: "I got a yellow card for tackling Adu; it's the softest yellow I've had in this League. If we're going to get them for tackling Adu, we might as well all play in an Under-14 league. He definitely belongs on the field, but treat him as if he's one of us."

Even with Adu starting, DC continued to struggle. After five games, they had won one, drawn two and lost two.

The Freddy-frenzy will cool down. Garber admits: "A little less attention wouldn't be the worst thing that could happen." Meanwhile, he and MLS will hang on to the tiger's tail for all they're worth. They need the attention it brings – particularly as the start of the season has been, in soccer terms, pretty dull.

Paul Gardner

Champions face title forfeit

NIGERIAN SIDE ENYIMBA could be stripped of their Champions League title, won last December, although the bizarre nature of the fraud they are alleged to have committed on their way to taking the trophy is so embarrassing to the Confederation of African Football that it is vacillating on the case.

Ismaili of Egypt – Enyimba's Final opponents – have brought a formal protest centring on the accusation that Ahmed Garba was ineligible when appearing in the second leg. Ismaili claim the player was used even though Enyimba had sold him to another club earlier in the season, and thus made his participation illegal under CAF rules. The embarrassment for the ruling body is that Garba should have been de-registered as an Enyimba player after he moved to Kano Pillars, another Nigerian club, having appeared for Enyimba in the early stages of the Champions League. But because CAF has no such system in place, Enyimba were able to get the player back after the Nigerian domestic season had ended but before the Champions League Final.

Poor record-keeping in Africa means what should be a cut-and-dried case is proving difficult for Ismaili to prove. They have given CAF video evidence of Garba playing for Pillars in October, but CAF says it wants to verify it independently before proceeding further.

Confederation president Issa Hayatou is certainly reticent to dethrone Enyimba and make a laughing stock of his own organisation. Meanwhile, the Nigerian FA, while not disputing the facts, is putting up a vehement defence that information given to Ismaili about Garba's transfer was obtained fraudulently.

It is too late for Ismaili to gain entry into this year's Champions League, as defending champions by default, but they will continue the case on a matter of principle.

Mark Gleeson

Tainted victory?...Enyimba celebrate Champions League triumph but are said to have fielded an ineligible player in the Final

Big four fall

FOUR RECENT AFRICAN Champions League winners went clattering out in the early stages of this year's competition, which also produced another fairytale win for a team from Rwanda. Kigali side APR FC beat Zamalek of Egypt 6-4 on aggregate in their second-round tie to continue the giantkilling run of the tiny east African country. They were surprise first-time qualifiers for this year's African Nations Cup finals and missed out on a place in the quarter-finals by a point.

APR, the army team, came back from a goal down in the second, home leg to beat 2002 Champions League winners Zamalek 4-1.

The latter's compatriots Al Ahly, the 2001 champions, were also eliminated following a goalless draw with Sudan's Al Hilal in Khartoum. Al Ahly surprisingly lost the first leg 1-0 at home – only the second time they had been beaten in Cairo in almost three decades of continental club competition.

The 1999 winners, Raja Casablanca of Morocco, lost 5-4 on penalties to Jeanne d'Arc of Senegal after a 2-2 aggregate draw, while Ivory Coast's ASEC Abidjan, the 1998 champions, went out on away goals to Asante Kotoko of Ghana. Only two former champions – holders Enyimba and Ghana's Hearts of Oak, winners in 2000 – reached the third round.

Ismaili, last year's Champions League runners-up, were also knocked out of continental competition, losing 2-0 to Stade Tunisien of Tunisia in the new African Confederation Cup.

Mark Gleeson

ROUND-UP

Algeria helm...Waseige

CENTRAL AFRICA

● GABON international Etienne Bito'o has left Gil Vicente in Portugal to join South African side Wits University.

● Jean-Paul Akono, who took CAMEROON to the gold medal at the last Olympic Games, was sacked after the Under-23s failed to qualify for August's tournament in Athens.

EAST AFRICA

● AS Port Louis 2000 won the Cup in MAURITIUS, beating US BeauBassin/Rose Hill 2-1 in the Final.

● Mike Mutebi is the new coach of UGANDA, succeeding Argentinian Pedro Pasculli. One of Mutebi's predecessors, Paul Hasule, has died aged 42. Hasule, a former national team captain, was replaced a year ago. Another former Ugandan international, Charles Kayembe, has also died, at 30.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

● SWAZILAND have appointed Dumisa Mahlalela as their national team coach for a third spell.

● Former ANGOLAN international defender Juliao Kutonda, 30, has died after a car accident in France, where he was playing Third Division football. Luanda side InterClube fired Serb coach Zoran Pesic after they were beaten in the second round of the African Confederation Cup.

● Maxaquene won the MOZAMBICAN Super Cup with a 5-1 aggregate victory over Ferroviario Nampula.

● MALAWI have appointed a three-man team to lead the national side in the World Cup qualifiers – Kinnah Phiri, Dave Mpesi and John Kaputa. The unusual arrangement is made even more bizarre by the decision to award a contract extension to the best performer after a year to lead the side on his own.

● Dynamos beat arch-rivals Highlanders 2-1 in ZIMBABWE'S Independence Cup Final.

NORTH AFRICA

● Robert Waseige has agreed to become national coach of ALGERIA, on a four-year contract. The former Belgium boss has been in charge of Charleroi this season.

● EGYPT have also appointed a European as national coach, Italian World Cup winner Marco Tardelli taking the helm. German Theo Bucker has had his contract with club side Ismaili extended for another year. They were runners-up in last year's African Champions League. Al Ahly, who withdrew from this year's Arab Champions League in a row with the Egyptian federation, have been fined £7,400 and kicked out of next year's tournament.

● Frenchman Roger Lemerre, who led TUNISIA to African Nations Cup glory in February, has extended his contract until after the 2006 World Cup finals.

● In MOROCCO, Portuguese coach Acacia Casimiro has succeeded Henri Michel at Raja Casablanca.

● Manfred Dine, originally from Cameroon, is the new coach of AS Garde Nationale of MAURITANIA.

WEST AFRICA

● Former French international Alain Moizan is the new MALI coach. He previously worked at Jeanne d'Arc in neighbouring Senegal.

● Germany-born Hans-Dieter Schmidt resigned as coach of GHANAIAN club King Faisal Babies just months after taking them to their first major trophy, the domestic Cup.

● Former GUINEA star Alioune N'Jolea Keita, an African Champions Cup winner with Haifa, has died in Conakry.

● BURKINA FASO have named Ivica Todorov as their new national coach. He previously worked in Morocco.

Mark Gleeson

Baxter in to soup up South Africa

SOUTH AFRICA have turned to former England youth coach Stuart Baxter to revive their national team's flagging fortunes. The Briton, who won the Swedish League with AIK Stockholm in 1998, could be the breath of fresh air desperately needed after the dismal first-round exit in this year's African Nations Cup.

Baxter, though, will have to negotiate a minefield of xenophobia in a country where British coaches are seen as neo-colonialist and therefore inherently racist.

He is well aware he needs quick success to keep the stone-throwers in the FA and elements of the media from readying their ammunition. "In a perfect world, England would not have Sven Goran Eriksson as their coach and the South African side would have a South African in charge," says Baxter. "I hope that when I get down to work, South Africans will see I know my job and that the knowledge I bring to the table will be worth accepting, as England did with Sven."

His first task is to secure victory at home to low-ranking Cape Verde Islands in South Africa's opening World Cup qualifier on June 5. A much tougher trip to Ghana follows two weeks later.

Baxter has already set about rebuilding the bridges burnt when predecessor Ephraim Mashaba was in charge. Mashaba, a prickly character, slowly and almost wilfully lost the services of his best overseas-based players – Benni McCarthy, Quinton Fortune and Shaun Bartlett – having clashed with them over their availability (or lack of it) for the national team.

Perhaps a little unsure of his own credentials, Mashaba was far happier working with naive youngsters from the domestic League, who perhaps would not notice his inadequacies. By last May, Mashaba had run out of players when he named his squad for a friendly against England, organised to show off South Africa's 2010 World Cup bid. So, amazingly, he was sidelined for one game and all the foreign stars recalled, happy to play against David Beckham and co and for their old coach Jomo Sono, brought in as temporary replacement.

But instead of packing Mashaba off permanently, he was surprisingly restored to his job. Only when it was clear his squad for the Nations Cup finals was bereft of any real match-winning talent did the FA finally do something, firing him on the eve of the tournament.

It was too late by then to change the playing personnel, however, and all the decision did was to re-emphasise the poor quality of South African football's decision-making ability. With the appointment of Baxter they are seeking to change that record.

Mark Gleeson

Rebuilding bridges...Stuart Baxter

Coelho shown the exit

SOUTH KOREA

Language difficulties...Coelho

SOUTH KOREA and Portuguese coach Humberto Coelho have parted company by mutual consent in the wake of the shock 0-0 draw with lowly Maldives in a late March World Cup qualifier.

Coelho took the job just over a year ago as the Koreans sought a long-term replacement for World Cup coach Guus Hiddink. But results have been mixed, with the sequence including defeats at the hands of Vietnam and Oman in the Asian Cup qualifiers.

"I am very sorry that I could not finish my term," Coelho told a press conference. "I hope the KFA will support the next coach of the Korean national team. For a foreign coach, who cannot speak Korean and does not know Korean culture, managing the national football team is not an easy task."

That matter has been alleviated in the short term by the appointment of Park Sung-hwa as caretaker. Park, who led Ilhwa Chunma to three League titles in the mid-1990s, spent a year in charge of the national side in 1996.

The KFA has announced a shortlist of 10 coaches it is targeting to take the job on a long-term basis. Ex-Republic of Ireland manager Mick McCarthy is a surprise inclusion, with the favourite being former Senegal boss Bruno Metsu. The Frenchman took Al Ain, his United Arab Emirates club side, to victory in last year's Asian Champions League.

The Korean Olympic team picked up Asia's second spot at this summer's Olympics, finishing ahead of Iran, China and Malaysia in their qualifying group. They join Japan in the finals.

Defending K-League champions Songnam Ilhwa slipped to the bottom after six rounds of the new season after a 2-1 loss to leaders Pohang Steelers.

Michael Church

Jubilo jump ahead

JAPAN

With only six First Stage games completed in the J.League, the question is who is going to stop Jubilo Iwata? The 2002 champions took maximum points from those early rounds, putting them five clear of nearest challengers JEF United Ichihara.

Jubilo have undoubtedly been boosted by the return of hard-running midfielder Toshiya Fujita, the 2001 J.League Player of the Year, after his brief stay at Utrecht. Striker Rodrigo Gral has also been in good form, hitting goals in five consecutive J.League games despite having ruptured an adductor muscle in January.

Although JEF United Ichihara have been performing well on the pitch, the fans are in uproar over a proposed name change, to JEF United Chiba. Chiba is the name of the prefecture where the city Ichihara is located. The club see the change of name as a way to expand their fan base, but many fans regard it as a betrayal.

Mike Plastow & Yumiko Nagae

ROUND-UP

Fun and Games...Pakistan take gold

ASIA

- China's Dalian Shide became the first team to qualify for the quarter-finals of the ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE with a 3-1 win over Thailand's Krung Thai Bank in the penultimate round of matches. The former Chinese champions won their first five games in Group F to put them out of reach of their opponents.

Group B was thrown into confusion after the expulsion of Kuwait's Al Qadisiya following a brawl during their home game with Al Sadd of Qatar. Al Qadisiya's results were annulled, leaving Al Wahda of the United Arab Emirates a point ahead of the Qataris.

Al Qadisiya were also banned from all Asian competitions for three years, Al Sadd were fined £5,500, while four players were banned for two years from AFC competitions.

- IRANIAN striker Vahid Hashemian has signed for Bayern Munich from Bochum. Paas won the domestic League by two points from Esteghlal.

- Czech coach Milan Macala has extended his contract with the OMAN national team by two years.

- Attapol Puspakom, who led THAI side BEC Tero Sasana to the Asian Champions League Final last year, has been fired by the club. Former Thai Farmers Bank midfielder Sasom Pobprasert is the caretaker boss.

- Pakistan defeated India 1-0 in the SOUTH ASIAN FEDERATION GAMES football Final. Sri Lanka took bronze after beating Bhutan 3-2 on penalties.

- Valencia beat Victory 2-0 to lift the MALDIVES FA Cup.

Michael Church & Azam Mahmood

OCEANIA

- Perth Glory retained the League title in AUSTRALIA with a 1-0 win over Sydney's Parramatta Power in the Grand Final.

Parramatta went into the game as favourites, since it was being played at their home stadium and they had been the best team earlier in the play-offs. However, the West Australians adapted best to the waterlogged pitch. Even so, they did not get their winner until extra-time, a golden goal from substitute Nick Mrdja.

Power were disbanded after the game because their rugby league club owners are unwilling to continue giving financial support for what has proved to be a costly venture.

- The ailing NEW ZEALAND League has been reduced to eight teams in an effort to revitalise it. Canterbury United, Manawatu, Napier City Rovers and Central United survive from the 2003 edition, though the last three will be in different guises – Youngheart Manawatu, Napier City and Auckland City respectively. The other four members – Otago United, Team Wellington, Waikato FC and Waitakere United – are new entities.

- Tafea won VANUATU'S Sunrice Cup by default after Shepherds United were prevented from playing in the Final because they had not paid a fine imposed on them by the federation.

- Solomon Islands defeated Vanuatu 2-1 twice within five days in warm-ups for the WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS. In other preparatory games, Samoa drew twice and lost twice on their tour of New Zealand. The series included a scoreless draw with the Cook Islands in Auckland.

Paul Moon

TALENT SCOUT

TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY

Aiden McGEADY

Glaswegian teenage sensation opting for Ireland over Scotland

THE NAME OF Aiden McGeady has been on the football grapevine for the past couple of years. Now it seems the Celtic wonderkid is about to bear fruit.

But while the 18-year-old was compared to Ronaldinho by his club boss Martin O'Neill after scoring on his first-team debut for Celtic in April, the Scottish media have been sent into a frenzy by his decision to play international football for the Republic of Ireland ahead of his native Scotland.

The Rangers half of Glasgow's sectarian divide have been quick to voice their displeasure, but McGeady is sticking by his choice. "It's not an issue as far as I'm concerned," insists the youngster, Glasgow-born but with Irish grandparents. "Ireland came to me first and I have enjoyed playing with their junior sides so far.

"Brian Kerr was in charge of one of the Ireland teams I played for, and I was impressed by his knowledge of the game. He is doing a great job with the senior team now and getting a call-up has got to be a target for me."

The son of former Sheffield United winger John McGeady, the teenager turned down big offers from English clubs such as Arsenal in a bid to build his career in the Scottish Premier League. His father is guiding his boy with care and learning from the mistakes he made as a player.

"I left home when I was 16 to join Sheffield United and it was tough for me," admits McGeady Snr. "I was seriously homesick and that was one of the main reasons why Aiden stayed at Celtic when he had options to join English clubs.

"The deals on the table were incredibly lucrative and some parents may have cracked and taken the money. But that wouldn't have been best for Aiden. The big clubs are mercenaries and tend to prey on parents in a bid to seduce them, but I was never going to fall for that one." Sportswear giant Adidas did get a signature, however, putting Aiden on a long-term sponsorship deal when he was just 13.

John's decision to appoint former Sheffield United team-mate Gary Hamson as Aiden's agent should ensure there is a personal touch to his business affairs. Celtic, for their part, are determined to keep the media away from their prize asset, and have offered McGeady a bumper four-year contract.

As for the teenager's playing abilities, his father says: "Aiden can play in a variety of positions. He can fill in on either wing or just off the main striker. And there is no way he is a luxury player. He gets stuck in when he needs to, and that is a quality he needs to develop further."

Kevin Palmer

FACT FILE

Club Celtic (Sco)
Country Republic of Ireland
Born April 4, 1986, in Glasgow

IBRAHIM Toraman

Sky's the limit for Turkish defender of new generation

IBRAHIM TORAMAN stands on a threshold. Over the next year, the young Gaziantepspor regular may become the defensive mainstay of a rejuvenated Turkish national team; he may move from the sporting backwater of south-east Turkey to one of the big three Istanbul clubs; he could also, in new team colours, shine in the Champions League for all to see.

He could. But the 22-year-old just wants to take things step by step. "I've just moved to a new stage. I need to be more responsible, more consistent. And these transfer rumours have really been distracting me," he says. "With the national team, I just want to establish myself. There is a lot of stress and excitement because this is a transitional period for the team."

Ibrahim is acutely aware that his elevation from the Under-21 ranks came at an unfortunate time. Challenging for a regular place in the senior national side that sensationally finished third at the World Cup was a struggle as then coach Senol Gunes was wary of tinkering with a winning combination. Then, when Gunes did decide to boost the squad with energetic young hopefuls such as Ibrahim, Turkey were, equally sensationally, knocked out of the Euro 2004 running by Latvia.

So instead of the showcase of the European Championship finals, Turkey's young generation now face the much less glamorous fight to qualify for the 2006 World Cup. What they will need badly is a strong defence, an essential often overlooked in a country where the glory a striker can bring is the focus.

"There aren't many defenders in Turkey, that's true," says Ibrahim. "It's not very fashionable. Nevertheless, you have to play where you are best. I've played up front and in midfield but I'm best as a stopper. That's not to say that I don't get goals."

Quite so. Ibrahim's pace, dribbling skills and fearsome free-kicks mean he is a more-than-useful attacking tool, on top of his excellent defensive abilities.

Of course, there are faults. The youngster is fine when charging about and putting in tackles, but he can look nervous when in possession. There is also a streak of inconsistency that needs to be ironed out.

Self-deprecating and soft-spoken, Ibrahim is the first to acknowledge his failings. "I was very uptight," he said following a recent 4-1 League defeat by Besiktas. "I can't afford any more to play one good game followed by a bad one."

Time will show whether he has the mettle to do this, but it is encouraging to hear that he regularly stays on after normal training sessions at Gaziantepspor to refine aspects of his game.

He is clearly aware that extra hard graft is essential to any player who wants to stand out. Yet in Turkey there is always a sense that talent will go to waste unless a player can secure a move to one of the Big Three clubs, Istanbul's Besiktas, Fenerbahce and Galatasaray.

It's true that Gaziantepspor made their mark in the domestic League this season and also reached the third round of the UEFA Cup for the first time – they even steamrollered Roma in Turkey in February (Ibrahim all but immobilised Marco Delvecchio and impressed the Italians) before going down in the away leg.

But they just don't get the column inches of the top Istanbul sides. For one thing, it is a rarity to find a reporter who will travel all the way to Gaziantep, near the Syrian border. And when a provincial side like theirs does beat one of the capital city Goliaths, the papers are more likely to offer reams of words on the losers' failings rather than the victors' skills.

In this environment, it is inevitable that Ibrahim must look elsewhere. "I don't feel I desperately need to leave Gaziantep," says the defender, who has come up through his club's junior ranks. "But the truth is that to go to Europe you have to pass through the Big Three, and for everyone here Europe is the dream."

He may be looking west, but Ibrahim – whose slightly oriental looks mean he bears a passing resemblance to Turkey's World Cup hero and new J.League darling Ilhan Mansiz – already has a Japanese fan club in the making. "I get these letters from Japan," he says, bemused. "I don't know where they found out about me – I wasn't even at the World Cup in Japan."

Suna Erdem

FACT FILE

Club Gaziantepspor
Country Turkey
Born November 20, 1981, in Sivas
International debut November 2002, v Italy
International caps 9 (0 goals)

Elkin MURILLO

Giant-striding Colombian helping to get his national team back on track

THIS LOOKS LIKE being the year when Elkin Murillo finally fulfils his promise. Former Colombia coach Francisco Maturana was fond of comparing the rangy forward to Faustino Asprilla. "We are good friends," agrees Murillo. "We have a similar running style and come up with the same sort of moves." But he will never be as devastating a central striker as his illustrious compatriot – as Colombia found to their cost when they missed out on the last World Cup.

Murillo helped Colombia to their 2001 Copa America triumph, but then they dropped vital World Cup qualifying points at home to Peru and Ecuador. In both games he was through on the goalkeeper, but both times the chance went begging.

He is far more effective in the open spaces out wide, as new Colombia coach Reinaldo Rueda would attest. His recall of Murillo was fundamental to the win in Peru in March that got their 2006 World Cup qualifying campaign back on track.

In previous games centre-forward Juan Pablo Angel had been horribly isolated. Although full of classy lay-offs and terrific in the penalty area, the Aston Villa man has a short running stride that means it takes him longer to cover distances. Murillo's giant stride and capacity to work both flanks are complementary to Angel and brought out the best in him against Peru.

The introduction of Murillo, plus the bursts from midfield of Frankie Oviedo, gave Colombia exactly what they had been lacking – pace and presence in the final third of the field. Peru's defence was torn apart time and time again, and Murillo was showered with man of the match awards by the Colombian press.

A move abroad at the beginning of the year kick-started Murillo's career. He joined Ecuadorean champions LDU of Quito, and slotted straight into their swashbuckling side, scoring four goals in the group stage of the Libertadores Cup.

The coach who signed and brought out the best in him was Uruguayan Jorge Fossati, who says: "Murillo can both score and set up goals. He has the capacity to work back and help win the ball, and can operate in midfield with no problems. He's the type of player who can be useful to any coach."

Fossati has since left to take charge of the Uruguayan national team. Providing Murillo can shake off a slight injury in time he could make it hot for his old boss in Barranquilla on June 6, when Colombia meet Uruguay in a World Cup qualifier.

Tim Vickery

FACT FILE

Club LDU Quito (Ecu)
Country Colombia
Born September 20, 1977, in Apartado
Previous clubs Deportes Quindio, Independiente Medellin, Deportivo Cali
International debut June 2001, v Argentina
International caps 14 (0 goals)
Honours Copa America 2001

Tranquillo BARNETTA

Swiss teenage prodigy heading for Leverkusen

THE SWISS UNDER-17 side that won the European Championship in 2002 has proved a rich vein for leading continental clubs to mine. Centre-back Philippe Senderos was taken on by Arsenal, midfielder Sandro Burki went to Bayern Munich and in June the versatile Tranquillo Barnetta will be leaving St Gallen on a Bosman free for Bayer Leverkusen.

The German club had good reason to be pleased when announcing the 18-year-old was on his way. For a minimal outlay – paying St Gallen a development indemnity – they had their hands on arguably the most promising youngster in Swiss football, quick and purposeful with an abundance of grit and confidence.

"I've no doubt Barnetta will be a success in the Bundesliga," says Switzerland and Monchengladbach keeper Jorg Stiel. "Although very young, he has the drive and personality to impose himself."

Leverkusen's problem will be where to play him. Barnetta has been outstanding for St Gallen this season on both the right and left of midfield, and also has experience at full-back and in attack. Whatever, the main thing for the Germans is that they've got their man. When Basle made Barnetta an offer a year ago, the reply was 'thanks but no thanks'. He said he had no wish to leave St Gallen before the end of his contract and wanted to complete his business apprenticeship with a local fabric and bed linen manufacturer.

This summer he should be with the Swiss Under-21s in the European finals in Germany. But some believe he should be in the full squad in Portugal. "There is a vacuum on the flanks of the national team," opined ex-national team striker Adrian Knup. "Barnetta would be the solution."

That is a little premature. Barnetta still needs to live up to his Christian name, to show more composure on the ball. When he does, he can be sure of a long international career.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club St Gallen
Country Switzerland
Born May 25, 1985, in St Gallen
Previous club FC Rotmonten
Honours European Under-17 Championship 2002

Robert GREEN

Young England keeper on the up with Norwich

SO MUCH FOR England boss Sven Goran Eriksson's assertion that he would not look outside the Premiership for personnel. As far as goalkeepers are concerned, the Nationwide First Division has proved most kind to him.

Eriksson continued to pick David James – now with Manchester City – after West Ham were relegated last year, and recently young Robert Green of Norwich City was called into the England squad for the first time for the friendly in Sweden.

The 24-year-old, a key figure in Norwich's First Division championship-winning side this term, remained on the bench for the entire 90 minutes in Gothenburg. But his time will surely come at international level. Not only is he highly talented, with no discernible weaknesses, but it also has to be said that he does not face a great deal of competition.

With foreign keepers ruling the roost in the Premiership, good quality young English No 1s are thin on the ground. Apart from Green, Paul Robinson of Leeds and Liverpool's Chris Kirkland, the cupboard is not well stocked.

A Norwich regular for the past three seasons, Green certainly has all the attributes of a top keeper: the physical presence, composure, sharp reflexes, positional skills, the ability to organise and accurate distribution. What is more, he is a model professional. You will not find him preening and posing in Florida, Dubai or the Med in the off-season. He will probably be recharging his batteries with a game of cricket in a Norfolk park.

The only thing he lacks is top-flight experience, but with Norwich stepping up there is no reason why he should not take his game to an even higher level.

Green, who left his native Surrey in 1997 to become a trainee at Norwich, is now starting to receive his due in terms of national media coverage. But Norwich fans have long been convinced he would go far. Deputising for the injured Andy Marshall, Green gave an outstanding performance on his debut in a goalless East Anglian derby with Ipswich Town in April 1999. When Marshall moved on two years later to Ipswich, the youngster was the obvious choice to take over permanently.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Norwich
Country England
Born January 18, 1980, in, Chertsey
Honours English First Division 2004

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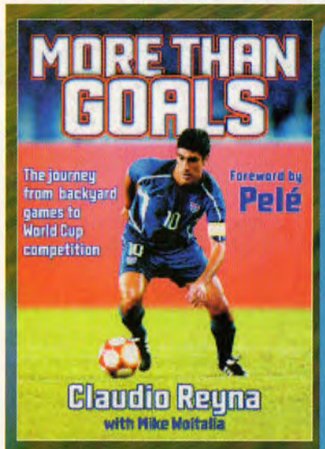

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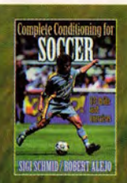

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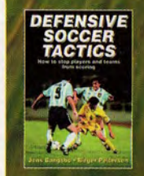

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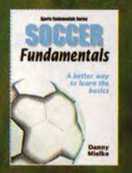

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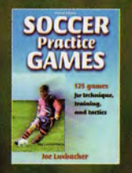

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INTERNATIONALS

Friday, April 2

Apr 2 - Hamilton - friendly
Bermuda 2 (Nusum 47, 67)
Nicaragua 1 (Palacios pen 72)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Raynor (Ber)
Bermuda: Adams - Burgess, Wade, Dill, Steede, Coddington, Hill (C Smith 68), Nusum, Bean (Simons 75), Peniston (Ming 66), Lewis.
Nicaragua: Tellez - Quintanilla, Palacios, T Acevedo (Sanchez 74), Alonso, D Solorzano, Bustos (Rodriguez 60), Alviles (Vallecillo 60), Vildez, West (Reyes 60), Fernando.

Saturday, April 3

Apr 3 - Port Vila - friendly
Vanuatu 1 (S Chilia 41)
Solomon Islands 2 (Menapi 52, 72)
HT: 1-0

Tuesday, April 6

Apr 6 - Port Vila - friendly
Vanuatu 1
Solomon Islands 2 (B Suri 34, Menapi)
HT: 1-1
Sent off: Kaukui (Solomon Is) 43min

Wednesday, April 7

Apr 7 - La Ceiba - friendly
Honduras 0
Panama 0
Att: 10,000. **Ref:** L Rodriguez (Hnd)
Honduras: Valladares - Sabillon, Figueroa, Izaguirre, Posas (Marin 64), W Palacios, E Martinez (Lopez 70), Jose Pineda (Mena 46), Guevara, Ferreira (Gonzalez 47), Velasquez (Costa 61).
Panama: James - Miranda, A Torres (Rivera 65), Henriquez, Moreno, Cubillas, Ramos, Lopez (Phillips 68), Brown, Aguilar, Jorge Dely Valdes (M Torres 75).

Sunday, April 11

Apr 11 - friendly
Mozambique 2
Swaziland 0
HT: 1-0

Wednesday, April 14

Apr 14 - friendly
Andorra 0
China 0

Monday, April 19

Apr 19 - friendly
Sudan 1
Syria 2
HT: 0-1

Wednesday, April 21

Apr 21 - friendly
Sudan 0
Syria 0

Sunday, April 25

Apr 25 - Zalaegerszeg - friendly
Hungary 3 (Kuttor 53, Juhasz 67, Huszti pen 90)
Japan 2 (Tamada 75, Kubo 78)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Trivkovic (Cro)
Hungary: Szucs - Juhasz, Molnar (Kuttor 46), Stark (Farkas 46), Simek (Kiss 61), Lipcsei, B Toth, Huszti, Gera (Dveri 46), M Toth (Torghelle 82), J Sebok (Hercegfalvi 46).
Japan: Narazaki - Tanaka, Tsuboi, Chano, Endo, Fukunishi (A Miura 61), Nishi (Kaji 61), Fujita (Motoyama 72), Alex, Kubo, Tamada.

Tuesday, April 27

Apr 27 - Curacao - friendly
Dutch Antilles 3 (Bernardus 6, 32, Cicilia 7)
Dominican Republic 1 (Zapata 9)
HT: 3-1. **Ref:** Faneite (A&B)
Sent off: Martha 17min, Emperador 45min (both Dutch Antilles); Sanchez (Dominican Rep) 30min

Wednesday, April 28

Apr 28 - Clermont-Ferrand, France - friendly
Algeria 0
China 1 (Xiao Zhanbo 26)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,600. **Ref:** Poulat (Fra)
Algeria: Benhammou - Belhadj, Yahia (Meniri 40), Zafour, Arribi, Achiou (Ammour 46), Bakour (Hadjadj 46), Ait Alia (Mamouni 46), Ziani (Bensaid 46), Arrache (Daoud 73), Boutabout (Akrour).

Apr 28 - Yerevan - friendly
Armenia 1 (Ara Hakopyan 68)
Turkmenistan 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,500

Apr 28 - Innsbruck - friendly
Austria 4 (Kirchler 5, Kiesenebner 9, Haas 85, Kollmann 88)
Luxembourg 1 (Huss 63))
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 9,400. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
Austria: Mandl (Schranz 46) - Stranzl, Hieblinger (Dospel 46), Martin Hiden (Standfest 72), Cerny, Kieseneber (Kovacevic 80), Schopp, Kirchler, Linz (Kollmann 56), Wallner (Haas 56), Amerhauser (Dollinger 60).
Luxembourg: Besic - Peters, Reiter, Schauls, Federspiel, Di Domenico, Molitor, Cardoni, Remy (Lassine 90), Huss (Leweck 77), Braun (Thimmesch 62).

Apr 28 - Minsk - friendly
Belarus 1 (Blizniuk 75)
Lithuania 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Ivanov (Rus)

ESM EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES

TEAM OF THE MONTH – APRIL 2004

La Gazzetta dello Sport · don balon · kicker · SPORT-EXPRESS · FOOT MAGAZIN · WORLD SOCCER · A BOLA · voetbal INTERNATIONAL · FANATIK · TIPS bladet

HOW THEY VOTED

A BOLA (POR)
Molina (Deportivo La Coruna); Mancini (Roma), Ricardo Carvalho (Porto), Nesta (Milan), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Figo (Real Madrid), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Pires (Arsenal); Morientes (Monaco), Pauleta (Paris Saint-Germain), Henry (Arsenal)

FANATIK (TUR)
Victor Valdes (Barcelona); Evra (Monaco), Puyol (Barcelona), Samuel (Roma), Bridge (Chelsea); Vieira (Arsenal), Valeron (Deportivo La Coruna), Deco (Porto); Morientes (Monaco), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Serhat (Fenerbahce)

GAZZETTA DELLO SPORT (ITA)
Canizares (Valencia); Ibarra (Monaco), Puyol (Barcelona), Ricardo Carvalho (Porto), Bridge (Chelsea); Rothen (Monaco), Totti (Roma), Vieira (Arsenal), Deco (Porto); Henry (Arsenal), Morientes (Monaco)

SPORT EXPRESS (RUS)
Victor Valdes (Barcelona); Fernando Couto (Lazio), Lucio (Bayer Leverkusen), Bridge (Chelsea); Giuly (Monaco), Totti (Roma), Valeron (Deportivo La Coruna), Ronaldinho (Barcelona); Henry (Arsenal), Morientes (Monaco), Gilardino (Parma)

VOETBAL INTERNATIONAL (HOL)
Reina (Villarreal); Manuel Pablo (Deportivo La Coruna), Ayala (Valencia), Toure (Arsenal), Nuno Valente (Porto); Giuly (Monaco), Vieira (Arsenal), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Pires (Arsenal); Henry (Arsenal), Totti (Roma)

DON BALON (SPA)
Reina (Villarreal); Baumann (Werder Bremen), Edmilson (Lyon), Maldini (Milan); Giuly (Monaco), Maniche (Porto), Xavi (Barcelona), Vicente (Valencia); Totti (Roma), Henry (Arsenal), Morientes (Monaco)

FOOT (BLG)
Victor Valdes (Barcelona); Manuel Pablo (Deportivo La Coruna), Campbell (Arsenal), Maldini (Milan); Giuly (Monaco), Totti (Roma), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Valeron (Deportivo La Coruna); Morientes (Monaco), Henry (Arsenal), Makaay (Bayern Munich)

KICKER (GER)
Molina (Deportivo La Coruna); Campbell (Arsenal), Ayala (Valencia), Quique Alvarez (Villarreal); Vieira (Arsenal), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Totti (Roma), Rothen (Monaco); Drogba (Marseille), Morientes (Monaco), Henry (Arsenal)

TIPS-BLADET (DEN)
Vitor Baia (Porto); Juan (Bayer Leverkusen), Ayala (Valencia), Bridge (Chelsea); Giuly (Monaco), Totti (Roma), Xavi (Barcelona), Ronaldinho (Barcelona); Gilardino (Parma), Morientes (Monaco), Henry (Arsenal)

WORLD SOCCER (UK)
Victor Valdes (Barcelona); Chivu (Roma), Ayala (Valencia), Evra (Monaco); Davids (Barcelona), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Giuly (Monaco), Vicente (Valencia); Totti (Roma), Morientes (Monaco), Henry (Arsenal)

Belarus: Khomutovsky - Omelyanchuk, Ostrovski, Rovneiko, Shtanyuk, Korytko, Khatskevich (Bulyga 46), Bialkevich, Romaschenko, Kovba (Gurenko 46), Kutuzov (Blizniuk 65).
Lithuania: Karcemarskas - Barasa, Skerla (Dziaukstas 46), Dedura, Skarbalius (Radzinevicius 78), Semberas, D Cesnauskis, Razanauskas (Vencevicius 59), E Cesnauskis, Jankauskas, Danilevicius (Tamosauskas 68).

Apr 28 - Brussels - friendly
Belgium 2 (Sonck 33, Dufer 85)
Turkey 3 (Basturk 43, Tolga 68, Gokdeniz 89)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Van Egmond (Hol)
Belgium: De Vlieger - Deschacht (Van Damme 46), Deflandre (Vanden Borre 89), Simons, Kompany, Clement (Bisconti 68), Goor (Blondel 87), Vermant (Baseggio 69), Buffel (Dufer 82), M Mpenza, Sonck (Pieroni 68).
Turkey: Rustu (Volkan 46) - Umit Davala (Sekan 46), Bulent Korkmaz (Ibrahim Toraman 46), Denis (Ibrahim Uzulmez 80), Umit Ozat, Emre Belozoglu (Murat 78), Tolga, Basturk (Gokdeniz 46), Tuncay (Zafer Biryol 69), Hasan Sas (Altintop 46), Hakan Sukur (Okan Buruk 59).

Apr 28 - Zenica - friendly
Bosnia-Herzegovina 1 (Misimovic 88)
Finland 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Bozinovski (Mac)
Bosnia: Brasnic (Avdukic 83) - Spahic (Biscevic 79), Konjic (Crnogorac 80), Hibic (Papac 6), Music, Grujic (Simic 55), Beslija (Hrgovic 78), Barbarez (Misimovic 63), Salihamidzic (Baljic 70), Blatnjak (Grlic 48), Bolic (Skoro 75).
Finland: A Niemi (Kaven 50) - Pasanen (Salli 52), Saarinen (Koppinen 47), Hyypia (Kuivasto 47), Tihinen, Nurmela (Multaharju 81), Vayrynen (Kopteff 77), Litmanen (Heikkenen 70), Kolkka, Eremenko, Johansson (J Niemi 70).

Apr 28 - Sofia - friendly
Bulgaria 3 (Berbatov 7, pen 54, Lazarov 56)
Cameroon 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 13,987. **Ref:** Verbist (Blg)
Bulgaria: Zdravkov (Ivankov 46) - V Ivanov (Topuzakov 60), Stoyanov, Pazin (Zagorcic 60), I Petkov (Kotev 60), Dimitrov (M Petkov 60), Stilian Petrov, Hristov (Peev 46), Jankovic (M Petrov 53), Berbatov, Lazarov (Yanchev 59).
Cameroon: I C Kameni (Hamidou 46) - Perrier Doumbe, Wome, Song (Falemi 85), Tchato, Emana (Gathuessi 78), Mezague, Mettomo, Makoun (Atouba 55), Idrissou, Meyong Ze (Tum 46). *Sent off: Mettomo 53min.*

Apr 28 - Antofagasta - friendly
Chile 1 (L Fuentes 56)
Peru 1 (Zuniga 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 32,000. **Ref:** Amarilla (Par)
Chile: A Vargas - Alvarez (B Gonzalez 46), Contreras, L Fuentes, R Perez, Melendez (Figueroa 63), Maldonado, Millar, Jimenez (Beausejour 77), Galaz (Cisternas 89), Pinilla.
Peru: Ibanez (Butron 71) - Salas, Acasiete, Vilches, Hidalgo (Galliquio 64), J Garcia (Orejuela 68), C Zegarra, Palacios (P Garcia 64), Quinteros (Chiroque 64), Silva (Zuniga 68), La Rosa.

Apr 28 - Prague - friendly
Czech Republic 0
Japan 1 (Kubo 33)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 11,802. **Ref:** McKeon (Ire)
Czech Republic: Cech (Blazek 46) - Bolf (Rozehnal 46), Ujfalusi, Jankulovski (Jiranek 46), Poborsky (Drobny 81), Rosicky (Vachousek 51), Galasek (Tyce 46), Nedved, Smicer (Mares 46), Baros (Heinz 46), Koller (Lokvenc 46).
Japan: Narazaki - Alex (Motoyama 81), Tsuboi, Tanaka, Chano (Kaji 46), Ono (Fukunishi 81), Inamoto (Endo 65), Fujita (A Miura 81), Nishi, Kubo, Tamada (Yanagisawa 63).

Apr 28 - Copenhagen - friendly
Denmark 1 (Sand 61)
Scotland 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 22,485. **Ref:** Ingvarsson (Swe)/Johannesson (Swe)
Denmark: Sorensen - Wieghorst (Retov 81), Henriksen (Kroldrup 66), Laursen, N Jensen (Sennels 46), Helveg, D Jensen, Gronkjaer (Rasmussen 84), Tomasson (Sand 46), Martin Jorgensen (Rommedahl 66), C Jensen (Perez 46).
Scotland: Gallacher - G Caldwell, Crainey, Dailly, Mackay, Pressley, Fletcher, Holt (Canero 17), Kyle, McFadden, Cameron (McCann 46).

Apr 28 - Washington DC - friendly
El Salvador 0
Colombia 2 (Rey 52, Oviedo 61)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 21,000. **Ref:** Vaughn (USA)

Apr 28 - Tallinn - friendly
Estonia 1 (Viikmae 80)
Albania 1 (Aliaj 51)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 1,500. **Ref:** Sipailo (Lat)
Estonia: Poom - Jaager, Stepanov, Piiroja, Klavan, Rahn, M Rooba (Smirnov 73), Reim, Viikmae, Oper, Lindpere (Kink 80).
Albania: Lika (Strakosha 46) - A Beqiri, Dede, E Beqiri, Aliaj, Hasi, Lala (Haxhi 46), Murati (Skela 46), K Duro (Myrtaj), Bushi (Kapllani 67), Tare.

Apr 28 - Accra - friendly
Ghana 1 (Morgan 90)
Angola 1 (Fofana 55)
HT: 0-0

Apr 28 - Eindhoven - friendly
Holland 4 (Makaay 50, Zenden 58, Heitinga 61, Van Hooijdonk 89)
Greece 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Bolognino (Ita)
Holland: Van der Sar - Heitinga, Stam (Reiziger 46), Bouma, Van Bronckhorst, Van Bommel (Sneijder 46), Seedorf, Van der Vaart (Van Hooijdonk 65), Makaay, Kluivert (Bosvelt 74), Zenden.
Greece: Nikopolidis - Seitaridis (Georgiadis 82), Fissas (Venetidis 65), Dabizas, Dellas, Goumas, Zagorakis (Basinas 46), Giannakopoulos (Lakis 46), Vryzas (Haristeas 46), Karagounis (Tsiartas 46), Nikolaidis (Papadopoulos 46).

Apr 28 - Fort Lauderdale, USA - friendly
Honduras 1 (C Pavon 31)
Ecuador 1 (Ordonez 81)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Saheli (USA)

Apr 28 - Budapest - friendly
Hungary 1 (Torghelle 56)
Brazil 4 (Kaka 33, Luis Fabiano 36, 45, Ronaldinho 76)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** De Santis (Ita)
Hungary: Babos - Stark, Lipcsei (Juhasz 46), Z Peto (Bodor 46), Bodnar (Hercegfalvi 86), B Toth, Molnar (Farkas 70), Huszti, Simek (Torghelle 46), Kenesei (Szabics 59), Gera (Dveri 67).
Brazil: Dida - Cafu (Mancini 46), Juan (Bordon 67), Roque Junior, Roberto Carlos (Dede 46), Juninho Pernambucano (Julio Baptista 61), Edmilson, Ze Roberto (Edu 46), Ronaldinho (Felipe 77), Luis Fabiano, Kaka (Alex 60).

Apr 28 - Tel Aviv - friendly
Israel 1 (Covalenco og 31)
Moldova 1 (Rogaciov 71)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 4,500. **Ref:** Corpodean (Rom)
Israel: Davidovich (Elimelech 56) - Uzan, Gershon (Ben-Haim 62), Benado, Antebi (Ben-Dayan 62), Badir (Zarfati 82), Tal, Afek (Balili 58), Berkovic (Golan 74), Benayoun (Gazal 74), Katan.
Moldova: Melenciuc - Priganiuc, Olexici (Boret 77), Covalenco, Catinsus, Bursuc, Lungu (Popov 55), Corneencov (Savinov 56), Covaliciuc (Rogaciov 65), Barisev (Lascencov 46), Dadu (Clescenco 70).

Apr 28 - Genoa - friendly
Italy 1 (Vieri 56)
Spain 1 (Fernando Torres 53)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,300. **Ref:** Poll (Eng)
Italy: Buffon (Peruzzi 46) - Panucci, Cannavaro (Ferrari 46), Materazzi, Zambrotta, Perrotta (Ambrosini 46), Pirlo (Nervo 76), Fiore (Diana 76), R Baggio (Miccoli 87), Di Vaio (Favalli 66), Vieri (Corradi 76).
Spain: Casillas (Canizares 79) - Michel Salgado (Manuel Pablo 46), Ivan Helguera (Cesar 65), Juanito, Raul Bravo, Xabi Alonso (Xavi 46), Albelda (Baraja 79), Etxeberria, Raul (Valeron 46), Vicente (Joaquin 46), Morientes (Fernando Torres 46).

Apr 28 - Aix-les-Bains, France - friendly
Ivory Coast 4 (Drogba 8, Toure 32, Kalou 45, Bakari 68)
Guinea 2 (Feindouno 12, Oulare 39)
HT: 3-2. **Att:** 2,000

Apr 28 - Kingston - friendly
Jamaica 2 (King 10, A Williams 45)
Venezuela 1 (Arango 27)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Ford (Bar)
Jamaica: Ricketts - Goodison, C Davis, Reid, Ziadie (Marshall 46), F Davis, Langley (Chin-Sue 67), A Williams (J Williams 90), King (Stewart 65), Ralph, Fuller (Hue 84).
Venezuela: Sanhouse (Toyo 46) - Rey, M Mea Vitali (Vizcarrondo 72), Rojas, H Gonzalez, Vielma, Villafraz, Arango (Vallenilla 60), Paez (Rivero 72), Margiotta (Noriega 46), Rondon (Moreno 60).

Apr 28 - Almaty - friendly
Kazakhstan 2 (Karpovits 55, Lunev 77)
Azerbaijan 3 (Nabiyev 31, Emin Guliev 57, Sadigov 80)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Chynybekov (Kyr)

Apr 28 - Riga - friendly
Latvia 0
Iceland 0
Att: 6,500. **Ref:** Shmolik (Bls)
Latvia: Kolinko - Stepanovs, Astafjevs, Zakresevskis, Laizans, Blagonadezdins, Isakovs, Lobanovs (Pahars 68; Stolcers 81), Verpakovskis, Rubins, Prohorenkovs (Rimkus 78).
Iceland: Arason - O O Bjarnason (B Gunnarsson 73), Vidarsson, I Sigurdsson (K O Sigurdsson 87), Marteinsson, Ingimarsson, Hreidarsson, Gretarsson, T Gudmundsson (Einarsson 81), T Gudjonsson (J K Gudjonsson 68), Baldvinsson (B Gudjonsson).

Apr 28 - Skopje - friendly
Macedonia 0
Croatia 1 (Klasnic 33)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Arzuman (Tur)
Macedonia: Nikoloski (Milosevski 46) - Stavrevski, Stojanoski (Bozinovski 46), Sedloski, A Mitreski, I Mitreski (Jankovski 75), Sumulikovski, Pandev (Tolevski 59), Krstev (Trajanov 46), Sakiri, Ciric (Cadikovski 46).
Croatia: Butina (Didulica 46) - Tokic, Simunic, Tomas, Zivkovic, Rapajic (Leko 46), Tudor (Bjelica 48), Srna, N Kovac, Sokota, Klasnic.

Apr 28 - Casablanca - friendly
Morocco 0
Argentina 1 (Kily Gonzalez 52)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Ndoye (Sen)
Morocco: Lamyaghri - El-Karkouri, Naybet (Chihab 71), Ouaddou, Kaissi, Kharja, Mokhtari (Baha 88), Yaacoubi (Diane 64), Chamakh, Hdioued (Kacemi 46), Zairi (Y Hadji 77).
Argentina: Cavallero - Quiroga, Ayala, Samuel, Zanetti, Cambiasso, D'Alessandro, Kily Gonzalez (G Milito 90), C Delgado, Crespo (Placente 87), Solari (Riquelme 46).

Apr 28 - Windhoek - friendly
Namibia 0
Botswana 0
Att: 1,500

Apr 28 - Belfast - friendly
Northern Ireland 1 (Quinn 18)
Serbia & Montenegro 1 (Paunovic 7)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 9,690. **Ref:** Richards (Wal)
N Ireland: Taylor (Carroll 46) - Baird, Craigan, Williams, Capaldi, Gillespie (Jones 46), Doherty (M Hughes 78), Whitley (Sonner 78), Mulryne (McVeigh 46), Healy (Hamilton 46), Quinn (Smith 78).
Serbia & Montenegro: Banovic - Cirkovic (Markoski 85), D Petkovic, Krstajic, Dragutinovic (Vitakic 46), Nadj, Gavrancic, Trobok (Ivic 46), Vukic, Paunovic (Kolakovic 70), Kezman.

Apr 28 - Oslo - friendly
Norway 3 (Andresen 25, Rushfeldt 43, Solli 62)
Russia 2 (Radimov 85, Kirichenko 90)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 11,435. **Ref:** Wegereef (Hol)
Norway: Myhre (E Johnsen 46) - El Fakiri, Riseth, Lundekvam (Hangeland 46), Riise, Andresen, Hoseth, Helstad (Solli 55), Solskjaer (F Johnsen 46), Pedersen, Rushfeldt (Carew 67).
Russia: Akinfeev - Evseev (Radimov 46), Ignashevich (Sharonov 46), Onopko, Sennikov, Gusev (Boyarintsev 46), Smertin, Loskov (Arshavin 46), Izmailov (Karyaka 46), Bulykin (Kerzhakov 46), Sychev (Kirichenko 46).

Apr 28 - Panama City - friendly
Panama 4 (Phillips 25, 90, Julio Dely Valdes 66, Tejada 68)
Bermuda 1 (Ashwood 14)
HT: 1-1

Apr 28 - Bydgoszcz - friendly
Poland 0
Rep Ireland 0
Att: 15,500. **Ref:** Shebek (Ukr)
Poland: Dudek (Boruc 59) - Michal Zewlakow (Kaczorowski 83), Klos (Bosacki 80), Glowacki (Hajto 46), Rzasa, Zurawski, M Lewandowski, Szymkowiak (Radomski 85), Mila (Smolarek 65), Krzynowek (Kosowski 46), Olisadebe (Niedzielan 46).
Rep Ireland: Given (Colgan 70) - O'Shea, Doherty (O'Brien 81), Cunningham, Harte (Maybury 63), S Reid, Miller, Kinsella, A Reid (Douglas 81), Morrison (Byrne 90), Lee (Barrett 63).

Apr 28 - Coimbra - friendly
Portugal 2 (Pauleta 33, Nuno Gomes 90)
Sweden 2 (Kallstrom 17, Rui Jorge og 86)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Ceferin (Sln)
Portugal: Ricardo (Quim 46) - Miguel (Helder Postiga 75), Jorge Andrade, Fernando Couto, Rui Jorge, Petit (Fernando Meira 66), Tiago (Frechaut 46), Rui Costa (Hugo Viana 66), Figo (Cristiano Ronaldo 63), Simao (Boa Morte 63), Pauleta (Nuno Gomes 63).
Sweden: Isaksson (Hedman 46) - Wahlstedt, Mellberg (Jakobsson 46), Mjallby (P Hansson 53), Lucic (Edman 46), Linderoth (Anders Andersson 72), A 'Djurgardens' Johansson (A Svensson 62), Kallstrom, Wilhelmsson, Allback (Skoog 46), Ibrahimovic (Elmander 62).

Apr 28 - Bucharest - friendly
Romania 5 (Plesan 21, Rat 23, Danciulescu 35, 43, Caramarin 85)
Germany 1 (Lahm 88)
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Rosetti (Ita)
Romania: Lobont - Stoican, Iencsi, Chivu (Ghionea 33), Rat, F Petre (Contra 77), Radoi, Plesan (O Petre 77), Dica (Caramarin 70), Danciulescu (Neaga 70), Ganea (M Niculae 83).
Germany: Kahn (Hildebrand 46) - Friedrich, Ramelow, Jeremies, Lahm, Schneider, Hamann, Ernst (Kehl 77), Frings (Freier 46), Bobic (Neuville 62), Kuranyi.

Apr 28 - Serravalle - friendly
San Marino 1 (A Selva 5)
Liechtenstein 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 700

Apr 28 - Incheon - friendly
South Korea 0
Paraguay 0
Att: 26,237. **Ref:** Kamikawa (Jap)
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Yoo Sang-chul (Kim Eun-jung 85), Kim Tae-young, Choi Jin-cheul, Lee Young-pyo, Song Chong-gug, Kim Nam-il, Lee Eul-yong, Ahn Jung-hwan, Seol Ki-hyeon, Chung Kyung-ho.
Paraguay: Aceval (Bobadilla 46) - D Gonzalez, Da Silva, Toledo, Lugo (Sarabia 46), E Gonzalez, A Ortiz, Dos Santos (Diaz 69), Duarte (Martinez 70), Cabanas (Roman 80), Bareiro.

Apr 28 - Geneva - friendly
Switzerland 2 (Celestini 66, H Yakin 85)
Slovenia 1 (Zahovic 45)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 7,500. **Ref:** Bossen (Hol)
Switzerland: Stiel (Zuberbuhler 46) - Haas (Meyer 78), Henchoz, Muller (Grichting 46), Berner (Spycher 58), Huggel (Lonfat 46), Vogel (Celestini 65), Wicky (Gygax 58), H Yakin, Frei (Rama 46), Chapuisat (Cabanas 81).
Slovenia: Mavric - Bulajic, Knavs, Cesar, Karic (Kokot 63), Acimovic, Pavlin, Ceh, Zahovic (Tanjica 89), Climiotic (Koren 46), Siljak (Jakomin 87).

Apr 28 - Sfax - friendly
Tunisia 1 (Jedidi 56)
Mali 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Shelmani (Lby)
Sent off: N'Dye (Mali)
Tunisia: Fadhel - Hagui, Yahia (Bhairi), Badra (Jaidi), Gehzel, Seghayer (Salem), Mnari, Chedli, Bouazizi, Jedidi (Missaoui), Santos.

Apr 28 - Kiev - friendly
Ukraine 1 (Venhlynskyi 13)
Slovakia 1 (Varga 65)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 18,000. **Ref:** Ryszka (Pol)
Ukraine: Shovkovskyi - Checher, Radchenko, Tymoshchuk, Yeserskyi, Rusol, Rotan, Rykun (Shelaiev 46), Nazarenko (Kalinichenko 66), Husiev (Rebrov 38), Venhlynskyi (Kosyrin 60).
Slovakia: Konig - Zabavnik, Varga, Kratochvil (Reiter 60), Gresko, Michalik, Karhan, Hanek, Mintal (Kisel 46), S Nemeth (Klimpl 86; Urban 90), Vittek (Dovicovic 84).

Apr 28 - Dallas - friendly
United States 1 (Pope 90)
Mexico 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 45,048. **Ref:** Navarro (Can)
USA: Walker - Hejduk, Pope, Mastroeni, Convey, Zavagnin, Donovan, Armas, Beasley, Casey (Kirovski 84), Wolff (Twellman 66).

Mexico: O Sanchez - D Davino, Rodriguez, Osorio, D Martinez, Valdez (Mora 67), Pardo (Lopez 46), Altamirano (M Perez 61), L Perez, Borgetti (Briseno 80), Bravo.

Friday, April 30

Apr 30 - friendly
Jordan 0
Libya 1

Apr 30 - Diriamba - friendly
Nicaragua 2 (D Solorzano 4, Palacios 30)
Bermuda 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 800

Saturday, May 1

May 1 - Guatemala City - friendly
Guatemala 1 (Pezzarossi 90)
Panama 2 (Julio Dely Valdes 35, pen 64)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,000
Sent off: Phillips (Panama) 90min

May 1 - Lusaka - friendly
Zambia 1 (Chansa 79)
Zimbabwe 1 (B Ndlovu 89)
HT: 0-0

Sunday, May 2

May 2 - Esteli - friendly
Nicaragua 2 (Rocha 8, Palacios 46)
Bermuda 0
HT: 1-0

Wednesday, May 5

May 5 - New Zealand - friendly
Cook Islands 0
Samoa 0

May 5 - Guatemala City - friendly
Guatemala 1 (Ruiz 49)
Haiti 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Recinos (ElS)

Saturday, May 8

May 8 - friendly
Grenada 1
St Vincent & The Grenadines 1
HT: 0-1

Wednesday, May 12

May 12 - Houston, USA - friendly
Haiti 3 (Peguero 10, Descolines 15, Lormera 82)
El Salvador 3 (Gochez 29, Murgas pen 43, Jose Martinez 72)
HT: 2-2. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Terry (USA)

COSAFA CASTLE CUP

1st rnd - Apr 18 - Maputo
Mozambique 2 (Tico-Tico 64, Fala-Fala 90)
Madagascar 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Damon (SAf)

1st rnd - May 9 - Luanda
Angola 2 (Love 26, 67)
Namibia 1 (Petrus 70)
HT: 1-0

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Quarter-finals, 2nd legs

April 6

Arsenal (Eng) 1 (Reyes 45)
Chelsea (Eng) 2 (Lampard 51, Bridge 87)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 35,486. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
Chelsea 3-2 on agg
Arsenal: Lehmann - Lauren, Toure, Campbell, Cole, Ljungberg, Vieira, Edu, Pires, Reyes, Henry (Bergkamp 81).
Chelsea: Ambrosio - Melchiot, Gallas, Terry, Bridge, Parker (Gronkjaer 46), Lampard, Makelele, Duff (J Cole 83), Hasselbaink (Crespo 83), Gudjohnsen.

Monaco (Fra) 3 (Giuly 45, 66, Morientes 48)
Real Madrid (Spa) 1 (Raul 35)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 18,000. **Ref:** Collina (Ita)
Agg 5-5. Monaco on away goals
Monaco: Roma - Ibarra, Rodriguez, Givet, Evra, Giuly (El Fakiri 82), Plasil, Cisse, Rothen, Prso (Nonda 61), Morientes (Adebayor 85).
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado (Raul Bravo 85), Ivan Helguera, Mejia, Roberto Carlos, Borja (Solari 72), Guti (Portillo 88), Figo, Zidane, Raul, Ronaldo.

April 7

Deportivo La Coruna (Spa) 4 (Pandiani 5, Valeron 34, Luque 44, Fran 76)
Milan (Ita) 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 28,000. **Ref:** Meier (Swi)
Deportivo 5-4 on agg
Deportivo: Molina - Manuel Pablo, Jorge Andrade, Naybet, Romero, Mauro Silva, Sergio (Duscher 85), Victor, Valeron (Djalminha 90), Luque (Fran 65), Pandiani.
Milan: Dida - Cafu, Nesta, Maldini, Pancaro (Rui Costa 76), Gattuso, Seedorf, Pirlo (Serginho 59), Kaka, Tomasson (Inzaghi 67), Shevchenko.

Lyon (Fra) 2 (Luyindula 14, Elber 90)
FC Porto (Por) 2 (Maniche 7, 47)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 39,103. **Ref:** Frisk (Swe)
Porto 4-2 on agg
Lyon: Coupet - Edmilson, Muller, Berthod, Essien (Reveillere 60), Dhorasoo (Deflandre 77), Diarra, Juninho (Bergougnoux 60), Malouda, Luyindula, Elber. *Sent off: Edmilson 74min.*
Porto: Vitor Baia - Paulo Ferreira, Jorge Costa, Ricardo Carvalho, Nuno Valente, Alenichev, Costinha, Maniche, Deco (Pedro Mendes 76), McCarthy (Jankauskas 57), Carlos Alberto (Pedro Emanuel 49).

Semi-finals, 1st legs

April 20

Monaco 3 (Prso 17, Morientes 78, Nonda 83)
Chelsea 1 (Crespo 22)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 18,500. **Ref:** Meier (Swi)
Monaco: Roma - Ibarra, Rodriguez, Givet, Evra, Bernardi, Zikos, Rothen (Plasil 88), Giuly (Nonda 82), Morientes, Prso (Cisse 56). *Sent off: Zikos 53min.*
Chelsea: Ambrosio - Melchiot (Hasselbaink 61), Desailly, Terry, Bridge, Parker (Huth 68), Makelele, Lampard, Gronkjaer (Veron 46), Gudjohnsen, Crespo.

April 21

FC Porto 0
Deportivo La Coruna 0
Att: 50,818. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
Porto: Vitor Baia - Paulo Ferreira, Jorge Costa, Ricardo Carvalho, Nuno Valente, Costinha (Pedro Mendes 46), Alenichev (Jankauskas 46), Maniche, Deco, Carlos Alberto, McCarthy (Marco Ferreira 70).
Deportivo: Molina - Manuel Pablo, Jorge Andrade, Naybet, Romero, Sergio (Duscher 76), Mauro Silva, Victor (Cesar 88), Luque (Fran 44), Valeron, Pandiani. *Sent off: Jorge Andrade 86min.*

Semi-finals, 2nd legs

May 4

Deportivo La Coruna 0
FC Porto 1 (Derlei pen 58)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,500. **Ref:** Collina (Ita)
Porto 1-0 on agg
Deportivo: Molina - Manuel Pablo, Cesar, Naybet, Romero, Duscher, Sergio (Diego Tristan 66), Victor (Scaloni 54), Valeron, Luque (Fran 71), Pandiani. *Sent off: Naybet 69min.*
Porto: Vitor Baia - Paulo Ferreira, Jorge Costa, Ricardo Carvalho, Nuno Valente, Costinha, Pedro Mendes (Bosingwa 87), Maniche, Deco, Carlos Alberto (Pedro Emanuel 67), Derlei (McCarthy 90).

May 5

Chelsea 2 (Gronkjaer 22, Lampard 44)
Monaco 2 (Ibarra 45, Morientes 60)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 37,132. **Ref:** Frisk (Swe)
Monaco 5-3 on agg
Chelsea: Cudicini - Melchiot (Johnson 64), Terry, Gallas, Bridge, Gronkjaer, Lampard, Geremi (Parker 69), J Cole, Gudjohnsen, Hasselbaink (Crespo 69).
Monaco: Roma - Givet, Rodriguez, Squillaci (Plasil 46), Evra, Ibarra, Cisse, Bernardi, Rothen, Giuly (Prso 67), Morientes (Nonda 81).

UEFA CUP

Quarter-finals, 1st legs

April 8

Bordeaux (Fra) 1 (Riera 18)
Valencia (Spa) 2 (Baraja 75, Rufete 88)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Riley (Eng)
Sent off: Mavuba (Bordeaux) 27min

Celtic (Sco) 1 (Larsson 64)
Villarreal (Spa) 1 (Josico 9)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Vassaras (Gre)

Marseille (Fra) 1 (Drogba 46)
Internazionale (Ita) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Cortez Batista (Por)

PSV Eindhoven (Hol) 1 (Kezman 15)
Newcastle (Eng) 1 (Jenas 45)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Veissiere (Fra)

Quarter-finals, 2nd legs

April 14

Internazionale 0
Marseille 1 (Meriem 74)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Milton Nielsen (Den)
Marseille 2-0 on agg

Newcastle 2 (Shearer 9, Speed 66)
PSV Eindhoven 1 (Kezman pen 52)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)
Newcastle 3-2 on agg

Valencia 2 (Pellegrino 52, Rufete 60)
Bordeaux 1 (Costa 71)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Fandel (Ger)
Valencia 4-2 on agg

Villarreal 2 (Anderson 6, Roger 68)
Celtic 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** De Santis (Ita)
Villarreal 3-1 on agg

Semi-finals, 1st legs

April 22

Newcastle 0
Marseille 0
Att: 52,004. **Ref:** Ivanov (Rus)
Newcastle: Given - Hughes, Woodgate, O'Brien, Bernard, Ambrose, Hugo Viana, Speed, Robert, Shearer, Ameobi (Bridges 78).
Marseille: Barthez - Beye, Hemdani, Meite, Ferreira, Flamini, N'Diaye, Dos Santos, Batiles (Celestini 89), Meriem, Drogba.

Villarreal 0
Valencia 0
Att: 22,000. **Ref:** Cortez Batista (Por)
Villarreal: Reina - Belletti, Coloccini, Quique Alvarez, Javi Venta, Josico, Battaglia, Jose Mari, Riquelme, Roger, Anderson.
Valencia: Canizares - Curro Torres, Pellegrino, Ayala, Carboni, Albelda, Baraja, Rufete, Angulo, Vicente (Xisco 85), Mista (Sissoko 72).

Semi-finals, 2nd legs

May 6

Marseille 2 (Drogba 18, 82)
Newcastle 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 52,000. **Ref:** Michel (Slk)
Marseille 2-0 on agg
Marseille: Barthez - Ferreira, Beye, Hemdani, Meite, Dos Santos, Flamini, N'Diaye, Mariet (Battles 80), Meriem, Drogba (Vachousek 89).
Newcastle: Given - Hughes, O'Brien, Bramble, Bernard, Ambrose, Hugo Viana (Bowyer 64), Speed, Robert, Shearer, Ameobi.
Valencia 1 (Mista pen 16)
Villarreal 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 55,000. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)
Valencia 1-0 on agg
Valencia: Canizares - Curro Torres, Ayala, Marchena (Pellegrino 73), Garrido, Albelda, Baraja, Sissoko (Vicente 61), Angulo, Xisco, Mista (Almar 77).
Villarreal: Reina - Belletti, Quique Alvarez, Coloccini, Arruabarrena, Josico (Guayre 85), Battaglia, Jose Mari, Riquelme, Roger, Anderson.

AUSTRIA

Apr 3: Bregenz 2 Admira 2; Karnten 1 Pasching 1; Mattersburg 2 Salzburg 1; Rapid Wien 0 Grazer AK 4.
Apr 4: Sturm Graz 1 Austria Wien 3.
Apr 7: Admira 0 Austria Wien 1; Grazer AK 1 Bregenz 0; Pasching 3 Sturm Graz 0; Rapid Wien 2 Mattersburg 0; Salzburg 3 Karnten 2.
Apr 14: Austria Wien 3 Salzburg 0; Bregenz 1 Pasching 1; Karnten 0 Grazer AK 0; Mattersburg 3 Admira 0; Sturm Graz 1 Rapid Wien 2.
Apr 17: Admira 1 Karnten 1; Grazer AK 1 Mattersburg 0; Rapid Wien 0 Bregenz 0; Salzburg 0 Sturm Graz 0.
Apr 18: Pasching 1 Austria Wien 1.
Apr 24: Bregenz 3 Mattersburg 2; Karnten 0 Rapid Wien 1; Salzburg 1 Pasching 2; Sturm Graz 2 Admira 0.
Apr 25: Austria Wien 1 Grazer AK 3.
May 1: Admira 1 Pasching 2; Bregenz 1 Karnten 1; Grazer AK 3 Salzburg 0; Mattersburg 2 Sturm Graz 2.
May 2: Rapid Wien 1 Austria Wien 2.
May 5: Rapid Wien 3 Karnten 2.
May 8: Austria Wien 4 Bregenz 1; Karnten 5 Mattersburg 1; Pasching 2 Rapid Wien 0; Salzburg 2 Admira 1.
May 9: Sturm Graz 0 Grazer AK 2.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Grazer AK	34	21	8	5	60	29	71
Austria Wien	34	20	8	6	60	27	68
Pasching	34	16	11	7	54	40	59
Rapid Wien	34	16	9	9	49	42	57
Bregenz	34	11	11	12	44	52	44
Admira	34	9	9	16	37	47	36
Salzburg	34	10	4	20	40	46	34
Mattersburg	34	8	10	16	35	56	34
Sturm Graz	34	7	11	16	35	49	32
Karnten	34	6	11	17	34	60	29

BELGIUM

Saturday, April 3

Anderlecht 0
Mouscron 0 Att: 24,500

Beveren 0
Standard 2 (Walasiak 35, Curbelo 60) Att: 5,000

Club Brugge 2 (De Cock 6, Verheyen 23)
Lokeren 1 (Tailson 62) Att: 24,253

Gent 1 (Zezeto 50)
Lierse 1 (Mitu 74) Att: 8,000

Royal Antwerp 3 (Johnson 20, Sergeant 66, Pivaljevic 68)
Genk 1 (Thijs 83) Att: 7,000

St Truiden 1 (Mbonabucya 51)
Mons 2 (Cardascio 6, Wamberto 45) Att: 8,500

Westerlo 3 (Brogno 26, Janssens 71, Delen 81)
Germinal Beerschot 1 (Cooreman 24) Att: 4,500

Sunday, April 4

Heusden-Zolder 3 (Barka 53, De Camargo 58, 78)
Charleroi 1 (Ikpeba 3) Att: 5,004

La Louviere 2 (Cooreman 13, Magro 71)
Cercle Brugge 0 Att: 2,500

Friday, April 9

Genk 1 (Vandenbergh 90)
Gent 0 Att: 23,173

Standard 1 (Mpenza 11)
Anderlecht 1 (Dindane 27) Att: 26,000

Saturday, April 10

Germinal Beerschot 1 (Snoeckx 37)
Heusden-Zolder 3 (De Conde 58, 67, De Camargo 60) Att: 7,000

Lierse 1 (De Roeck 16)
St Truiden 1 (Mbonabucya 60) Att: 6,300

Lokeren 2 (Tailson 20, Gretarsson 34)
La Louviere 0 Att: 6,500

Mons 2 (Malusci 33, Niemi 62)
Beveren 2 (Wostijn 25, Ne 90) Att: 4,500

Sunday, April 11

Cercle Brugge 1 (Arijs 44)
Royal Antwerp 2 (Souleymane 29, Dong 49) Att: 3,500

Mouscron 3 (Pieroni 1, Zewlakow 28, 74)
Westerlo 2 (Brogno 54, 90) Att: 6,142

Monday, April 12

Charleroi 1 (Olufade 19)
Club Brugge 1 (Lange 82) Att: 10,502

Friday, April 16

Anderlecht 4 (Jestrovic pen 61, 83, Kompany 63, Dindane 90)
Mons 1 (Wamberto 57) Att: 24,901

Saturday, April 17

Beveren 0
Lierse 1 (De Roeck 82) Att: 5,000

Charleroi 1 (Ikpeba 64)
Lokeren 2 (Tailson 58, 65) Att: 7,611

Gent 1 (Zezeto 24)
Cercle Brugge 1 (Milosevic 74) Att: 8,000

Royal Antwerp 1 (Atalay pen 47)
La Louviere 3 (Assou-Ekotto 16, Tilmant 32, Mamouni 88) Att: 7,500

St Truiden 0
Genk 3 (Roussel 51, Haroun 85, Van der Ven 87) Att: 11,000

Sunday, April 18

Club Brugge 2 (Victor 43, Lange 77)
Germinal Beerschot 1 (Camara 89) Att: 23,868

Heusden-Zolder 1 (Suzuki 66)
Mouscron 1 (Pieroni 14) Att: 5,120

Westerlo 2 (Dosunmu 29, 81)
Standard 4 (Mpenza 22, Sorondo 85, Aliyu 86, Walasiak 90) Att: 6,000

Friday, April 23

Mouscron 1 (Pieroni pen 89)
Club Brugge 1 (Smolders 11) Att: 10,234

Saturday, April 24

Cercle Brugge 2 (Jbari 47, Borkelmans 51)
St Truiden 1 (Baratto 44) Att: 4,050

Genk 1 (Roussel 90)
Beveren 0 Att: 23,416

Germinal Beerschot 3 (Snelders 38, 89, Haagdoren 68)
Charleroi 1 (Dufer 19) Att: 5,500

Lierse 1 (Delorge 55)
Anderlecht 1 (Jestrovic pen 25) Att: 11,250

Mons 0
Westerlo 0 Att: 3,500

Standard 4 (Turaci 7, Kaklamanos 41, Mpenza 73, Walasiak 81)
Heusden-Zolder 1 (De Camargo 48) Att: 13,000

Sunday, April 25

La Louviere 2 (Tilmant 82, Magro 87)
Gent 2 (Oussalah 38, Jarakovic 58) Att: 3,000

Lokeren 3 (Tailson 72, Gretarsson 74, Baldvinsson 83)
Royal Antwerp 0 Att: 5,900

Friday, April 30

Germinal Beerschot 2 (Dhont 20, Camara 70)
Lokeren 1 (Zoundi 8) Att: 5,500

Saturday, May 1

Charleroi 1 (Dufer 55)
Mouscron 0 Att: 10,800

Club Brugge 1 (Lange 6)
Standard 0 Att: 26,548

Gent 1 (Jarakovic pen 46)
Royal Antwerp 1 (Goots pen 90) Att: 10,100

Westerlo 2 (Dosunmu 33, Wagemakers 80)
Lierse 1 (Imschoot 45) Att: 6,500

Sunday, May 2

Anderlecht 2 (Iachtchouk 38, Moons og 85)
Genk 1 (Thijs pen 42) Att: 25,205

Beveren 1 (Vleminckx 21)
Cercle Brugge 1 (Vandenbussche 66) Att: 4,000

Heusden-Zolder 2 (Barka 63, De Camargo 82)
Mons 0 Att: 5,136

St Truiden 1 (Buvens 84)
La Louviere 2 (Mamouni pen 45, 63) Att: 5,000

Saturday, May 8

Cercle Brugge 0
Anderlecht 2 (Traore 33, Lovre 67) Att: 6,900

Genk 1 (Vandenbergh 22)
Westerlo 0 Att: 23,500

Gent 1 (Ndikumana 60)
Lokeren 1 (Kristinsson 22) Att: 9,000

La Louviere 3 (Tilmant 54, Odemwingie 63, 65)
Beveren 2 (Sanogo 15, Vleminckx 17) Att: 2,500

Lierse 4 (Schaessens 22, Sels 26, Delorge 32, Thompson 79)
Heusden-Zolder 0 Att: 7,500

Mons 0
Club Brugge 9 (Saeternes 18, 33, Lange 52, 88, Blondel 54, Verheyen 60, 63, 65, Ceh 85) Att: 5,000

Mouscron 3 (Pieroni 53, Claeys 60, Mpenza 68)
Germinal Beerschot 2 (Snelders 31, Cruz 39) Att: 8,234

Royal Antwerp 1 (Sergeant 80)
St Truiden 2 (Mbonabucya 2, Broux 73) Att: 8,000

Standard 1 (Mpenza 86)
Charleroi 1 (Ikpeba 74) Att: 19,318

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anderlecht	33	25	5	3	76	26	80
Club Brugge	33	21	6	6	74	31	69
Standard	33	17	11	5	66	30	62
Mouscron	33	15	13	5	63	41	58
Genk	33	16	8	9	55	38	56
Westerlo	33	14	9	10	50	44	51
Germinal B	33	11	11	11	33	38	44
La Louviere	33	10	13	10	44	45	43
Lierse	33	8	15	10	33	37	39
Lokeren	33	10	8	15	44	53	38
St Truiden	33	9	11	13	36	48	38
Gent	33	7	16	10	31	34	37
Beveren	33	10	5	18	40	56	35
Cercle Brugge	33	7	13	13	27	51	34
Mons	33	7	12	14	29	51	33
Charleroi	33	7	9	17	34	47	30
Heusden-Zolder	33	7	7	19	34	65	28
Royal Antwerp	33	7	6	20	28	62	27

LEADING GOALSCORERS
27 Luigi Pieroni (Mouscron)
19 Emile Mpenza (Standard)

BULGARIA

Apr 3: Chernomorets 1 CSKA 3; Belasitsa 1 Lovech 1; Rodopa 2 Cherno More 0; Lokomotiv Sofia 3 Naftex 1; Vidima-Rakovski 0 Slavia 0; Botev 2 Makedonska 1; Spartak Varna 2 Marek 4; Levski 3 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 0.
Apr 10: CSKA 3 Vidima-Rakovski 1; Lovech 2 Spartak Varna 1; Marek 1 Botev 0; Makedonska 3 Chernomorets 2; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2 Rodopa 0; Cherno More 0 Belasitsa 0; Naftex 0 Levski 1; Slavia 2 Lokomotiv Sofia 0.
Apr 16: Levski 1 Slavia 0.
Apr 17: Lokomotiv Sofia 0 CSKA 1; Cherno More 1 Lovech 2; Belasitsa 1 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2; Rodopa 1 Naftex 0; Vidima-Rakovski 3 Makedonska 2; Chernomorets 0 Marek 1; Botev 0 Spartak Varna 0.
Apr 24: Lovech 0 Botev 0; Spartak Varna 4 Chernomorets 2; Marek 1 Vidima-Rakovski 0; Makedonska 1 Lokomotiv Sofia 0; Slavia 1 Rodopa 2; Naftex 3 Belasitsa 1; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 8 Cherno More 1; CSKA 1 Levski 2.
May 1: Rodopa 1 CSKA 3; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 3 Lovech 1; Cherno More 2 Naftex 2; Belasitsa 2 Slavia 2; Lokomotiv Sofia 1 Marek 1; Vidima-Rakovski 1 Spartak Varna 1; Chernomorets 2 Botev 5; Levski 6 Makedonska 0.
May 5: Lovech 3 Chernomorets 0; Botev 1 Vidima-Rakovski 1; Spartak Varna 4 Lokomotiv Sofia 0; Marek 0 Levski 1; Makedonska 1 Rodopa 0; CSKA 5 Belasitsa 1; Slavia 2 Cherno More 0; Naftex 1 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2.
May 8: Naftex 1 Lovech 1; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 3 Slavia 2; Cherno More 3 CSKA 0; Belasitsa 2 Makedonska 2; Rodopa 1 Marek 0; Levski 2 Spartak Varna 0; Lokomotiv Sofia 0 Botev 1; Vidima-Rakovski 2 Chernomorets 1.

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lok Plovdiv	29	24	2	3	73	23	74
Levski	29	21	6	2	57	15	69
CSKA	29	20	4	5	64	27	64
Lovech	29	18	9	2	41	18	63
Slavia	29	17	3	9	55	30	54
Marek	29	12	1	16	33	50	37
Naftex	29	9	8	12	49	36	35
Cherno More	29	9	8	12	41	50	35
Rodopa	29	10	3	16	27	44	33
Lok Sofia	29	8	8	13	34	45	32
Belasitsa	29	8	6	15	34	52	30
Vidima-Rakovski	29	6	11	12	29	46	29
Spartak Varna	29	7	6	16	32	45	27
Botev	29	7	6	16	32	58	27
Makedonska	29	8	2	19	29	54	26
Chernomorets	29	4	5	20	27	64	17

CROATIA

Championship play-offs

Apr 3: Zadar 0 Osijek 3; Varteks 1 Rijeka 1; Hajduk 0 Dinamo 0.
Apr 10: Dinamo 5 Zadar 0; Rijeka 0 Hajduk 1; Osijek 4 Varteks 1.
Apr 17: Zadar 0 Varteks 0; Hajduk 2 Osijek 0; Dinamo 5 Rijeka 0.
Apr 21: Rijeka 3 Zadar 1; Osijek 2 Dinamo 3; Varteks 0 Hajduk 0.
Apr 24: Zadar 2 Hajduk 3; Varteks 3 Dinamo 4; Osijek 2 Rijeka 1.
May 1: Osijek 1 Zadar 1; Rijeka 1 Varteks 0; Dinamo 3 Hajduk 1.
May 8: Zadar 1 Dinamo 1; Hajduk 2 Rijeka 0; Varteks 2 Osijek 0.
May 12: Varteks 4 Zadar 1; Osijek 0 Hajduk 1; Rijeka 0 Dinamo 1.

CROATIA – CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hajduk	31	24	3	4	61	24	75
Dinamo	31	22	7	2	73	24	73
Rijeka	31	11	8	12	34	39	41
Osijek	31	11	6	14	49	53	39
Varteks	31	9	11	11	33	40	38
Zadar	31	7	10	14	44	69	31

CZECH REPUBLIC

Apr 3: Opava 1 Synot 0; Zlin 1 Ostrava 1.
Apr 4: Jablonec 3 Ceske Budejovice 2; Olomouc 2 Liberec 0; Teplice 1 Zizkov 1; Sparta 1 Chmel Blsany 0; Pribram 2 Plzen 1.
Apr 5: Brno 2 Slavia 2.
Apr 10: Slavia 2 Teplice 2; Synot 3 Ceske Budejovice 0; Ostrava 0 Jablonec 0.
Apr 11: Liberec 4 Pribram 1; Chmel Blsany 2 Olomouc 2; Brno 1 Zlin 2; Zizkov 0 Opava 0.
Apr 12: Plzen 1 Sparta 2.
Apr 17: Opava 0 Slavia 0; Zlin 3 Plzen 1.
Apr 18: Olomouc 1 Synot 0; Ceske Budejovice 2 Liberec 1; Jablonec 2 Chmel Blsany 1; Pribram 0 Ostrava 3; Teplice 2 Brno 1.
Apr 19: Sparta 3 Zizkov 1.
Apr 23: Ostrava 1 Teplice 0.
Apr 24: Slavia 3 Olomouc 1; Zlin 2 Jablonec 0.
Apr 25: Chmel Blsany 1 Pribram 0; Plzen 0 Opava 1; Zizkov 1 Ceske Budejovice 0; Brno 0 Sparta 0.
Apr 26: Liberec 3 Synot 3.
May 1: Opava 1 Liberec 3.
May 2: Olomouc 0 Ostrava 1; Pribram 1 Zizkov 1; Ceske Budejovice 1 Chmel Blsany 1; Teplice 2 Plzen 1; Jablonec 1 Brno 0; Sparta 3 Zlin 1.
May 3: Synot 4 Slavia 2.
May 8: Jablonec 2 Teplice 0; Zlin 0 Pribram 2; Brno 1 Olomouc 2; Chmel Blsany 4 Opava 3; Plzen 2 Ceske Budejovice 4; Slavia 1 Liberec 2; Ostrava 1 Sparta 2; Zizkov 0 Synot 1.

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ostrava	29	17	9	3	56	23	60
Sparta	29	15	10	4	46	23	55
Olomouc	29	15	7	7	42	24	52
Slavia	29	14	7	8	42	24	49
Synot	29	13	6	10	42	37	45
Liberec	29	11	10	8	35	27	43
Zlin	29	12	5	12	31	36	41
Ceske Budejovice	29	11	7	11	38	37	40
Jablonec	29	8	14	7	26	30	38
Teplice	29	8	12	9	29	32	36
Pribram	29	9	7	13	31	36	34
Opava	29	8	7	14	32	51	31
Brno	29	7	9	13	32	41	30
Chmel Blsany	29	8	6	15	34	53	30
Zizkov	29	6	9	14	18	31	27
Plzen	29	4	7	18	23	52	19

DENMARK

Apr 3: Brondby 3 Herfolge 0.
Apr 4: Esbjerg 4 Nordsjaelland 0; AB 1 Frem 0; OB 3 AaB 1; Viborg 1 Midtjylland 1; AGF 0 FC Copenhagen 2.
Apr 11: FC Copenhagen 3 Frem 2.
Apr 12: AaB 4 AGF 1; Esbjerg 0 Brondby 0; Nordsjaelland 0 Viborg 4; Herfolge 0 AB 1; Midtjylland 3 OB 1.
Apr 17: OB 2 Esbjerg 2.
Apr 18: Brondby 4 AaB 0; AB 0 FC Copenhagen 2; Frem 2 Midtjylland 1; Viborg 2 Herfolge 0; AGF 1 Nordsjaelland 2.
Apr 24: Viborg 3 Brondby 2.
Apr 25: AB 2 Esbjerg 5; Midtjylland 3 Nordsjaelland 0; FC Copenhagen 1 Herfolge 1; Frem 0 AaB 1; AGF 1 OB 0.
May 1: OB 0 FC Copenhagen 4
May 2: AaB 3 AB 1; Esbjerg 2 Viborg 0; Nordsjaelland 2 Frem 1; Herfolge 1 Midtjylland 4; Brondby 2 AGF 0.
May 8: Midtjylland 2 FC Copenhagen 1.
May 9: Brondby 1 OB 1; AB 2 Nordsjaelland 1; Frem 3 Herfolge 2; Viborg 0 AaB 1; AGF 4 Esbjerg 1.
May 13: Nordsjaelland 0 AaB 0; AB 0 OB 3; Herfolge 3 Esbjerg 1; Midtjylland 5 AGF 2; FC Copenhagen 1 Brondby 0; Frem 3 Viborg 1.

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Copenhagen	30	18	7	5	49	24	61
Esbjerg	30	17	8	5	64	37	59
Brondby	30	17	7	6	48	26	58
OB	30	15	7	8	59	43	52
AaB	30	14	8	8	44	37	50
Midtjylland	30	13	6	11	61	45	45
Viborg	30	10	8	12	43	40	38
AGF	30	10	3	17	43	62	33
Herfolge	30	8	6	16	31	45	30
Nordsjaelland	30	7	9	14	31	53	30
Frem	30	8	3	19	36	55	27
AB	30	6	2	22	25	67	20

ENGLAND

Saturday, April 3

Fulham 0
Birmingham 0 Att: 14,667

Middlesbrough 2 (Nolan og 8, Greening 51)
Bolton 0 Att: 30,107

Newcastle 4 (Bellamy 5, Dyer 21, Shearer 52, 90)
Everton 2 (Gravesen 13, Yobo 81) Att: 42,155

Tottenham 0
Chelsea 1 (Hasselbaink 38) Att: 36,101

Wolverhampton 1 (Camara 72)
Southampton 4 (Beattie 25, Lundekvam 58, Phillips 89, 90) Att: 29,106

Sunday, April 4

Aston Villa 1 (Angel 26)
Manchester City 1 (Distin 82) Att: 37,602

Liverpool 4 (Owen 7, 24, Todd og 22, Heskey 79)
Blackburn 0 Att: 41,559

Monday, April 5

Leeds 3 (Duberry 11, Viduka 13, Smith 86)
Leicester 2 (Dickov 77, Izzet 79) Att: 34,036

Friday, April 9

Arsenal 4 (Henry 31, 50, 78, Pires 49)
Liverpool 2 (Hyypia 6, Owen 42) Att: 38,119

Everton 3 (Unsworth 17, Naysmith 24, Yobo 40)
Tottenham 1 (Carr 75) Att: 38,086

Saturday, April 10

Birmingham 1 (Grainger 39)
Manchester Utd 2 (Cristiano Ronaldo 61, Saha 77) Att: 29,548

Blackburn 1 (Short 90)
Leeds 2 (Caldwell 2, Viduka 89) Att: 26,611

Bolton 2 (Pedersen 48, Davies 86)
Aston Villa 2 (Crouch 18, Hendrie 53) Att: 26,374

Charlton 1 (Bartlett 8)
Portsmouth 1 (Aiyegbeni 65) Att: 26,385

Chelsea 0
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 40,873

Leicester 0
Fulham 2 (John 66, 89) Att: 28,392

Manchester City 3 (Anelka 25, Sibierski 39, Wright-Phillips 90)
Wolverhampton 3 (Kennedy 13, Cort 23, Camara 78) Att: 47,428

Sunday, April 11

Newcastle 0
Arsenal 0 Att: 52,141

Monday, April 12

Aston Villa 3 (Vassell pen 39, Hitzlsperger 49, Hendrie 52)
Chelsea 2 (Crespo 11, 90) Att: 41,112

Fulham 3 (John 26, 45, Boa Morte 60)
Blackburn 4 (Cole 23, Douglas 49, Amoruso 51, Stead 75) Att: 13,981

Liverpool 0
Charlton 1 (Bartlett 63) Att: 40,003

Middlesbrough 3 (Juninho 23, Nemeth 32, Maccarone 49)
Southampton 1 (Beattie 70) Att: 30,768

Portsmouth 3 (Stefanovic 45, Lua Lua 62, Aiyegbeni pen 73)
Birmingham 1 (John 67) Att: 20,104

Tottenham 1 (Defoe 52)
Manchester City 1 (Anelka 25) Att: 35,282

Wolverhampton 1 (Camara 44)
Bolton 2 (Pedersen 43, Davies 90) Att: 28,695

Tuesday, April 13

Leeds 1 (Milner 50)
Everton 1 (Rooney 12) Att: 39,835

Manchester Utd 1 (G Neville 56)
Leicester 0 Att: 67,749

Friday, April 16

Arsenal 5 (Pires 6, Henry 27, pen 33, 50, 67)
Leeds 0 Att: 38,094

Saturday, April 17

Blackburn 1 (Dabizas og 42)
Leicester 0 Att: 22,749

Bolton 2 (Ivan Campo 7, Pedersen 65)
Tottenham 0 Att: 26,440

Charlton 1 (Holland 86)
Birmingham 1 (Morrison 84) Att: 25,206

Chelsea 0
Everton 0 Att: 41,169

Liverpool 0
Fulham 0 Att: 42,042

Manchester City 1 (Anelka 78)
Southampton 3 (Beattie 34, Phillips 55, 81) Att: 47,152

Portsmouth 1 (Stone 36)
Manchester Utd 0 Att: 20,140

Wolverhampton 2 (Cort 28, Camara 62)
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 27,975

Sunday, April 18

Aston Villa 0
Newcastle 0 Att: 40,786

Tuesday, April 20

Manchester Utd 2 (Saha 28, G Neville 65)
Charlton 0 Att: 67,477

Saturday, April 24

Everton 0
Blackburn 1 (Stead 81) Att: 38,884

Fulham 2 (Malbranque pen 18, Davis 64)
Charlton 0 Att: 16,585

Leicester 1 (Scowcroft 66)
Manchester City 1 (Tarnat 45) Att: 31,457

Manchester Utd 0
Liverpool 1 (Murphy pen 63) Att: 67,647

Middlesbrough 1 (Job 41)
Aston Villa 2 (Barry 45, Crouch 89) Att: 31,322

Southampton 1 (Pahars 21)
Bolton 2 (Nolan 77, Davies 78) Att: 31,712

Sunday, April 25

Birmingham 2 (Forssell 34, Morrison 41)
Wolverhampton 2 (Cameron 6, Cort 75) Att: 29,494

Leeds 1 (Harte pen 83)
Portsmouth 2 (Aiyegbeni 9, Lua Lua 51) Att: 39,273

Newcastle 2 (Ameobi 44, Shearer 48)
Chelsea 1 (J Cole 5) Att: 52,016

Tottenham 2 (Redknapp 62, Keane pen 90)
Arsenal 2 (Vieira 3, Pires 35) Att: 36,097

Saturday, May 1

Arsenal 0
Birmingham 0 Att: 38,061

Blackburn 1 (Stead 85)
Manchester Utd 0 Att: 29,616

Charlton 2 (Fortune 53, Di Canio pen 76)
Leicester 2 (Bent 5, Ferdinand 88) Att: 26,034

Chelsea 4 (Crainey og 59, Lampard 75, 83, Johnson 85)
Southampton 0 Att: 41,321

Manchester City 1 (Wanchope 59)
Newcastle 0 Att: 47,226

Portsmouth 1 (Aiyegbeni 80)
Fulham 1 (McBride 85) Att: 20,065

Wolverhampton 2 (Camara 55, Cort 84)
Everton 1 (Osman 3) Att: 29,395

Sunday, May 2

Aston Villa 1 (Angel 5)
Tottenham 0 Att: 42,573

Bolton 4 (Djorkaeff 47, 54, Harte og 55, Nolan 78)
Leeds 1 (Viduka pen 27) Att: 27,420

Liverpool 2 (Murphy pen 50, Heskey 53)
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 42,031

Tuesday, May 4

Portsmouth 1 (Aiyegbeni 30)
Arsenal 1 (Reyes 50) Att: 20,140

Saturday, May 8

Birmingham 0
Liverpool 3 (Owen 29, Heskey 51, Gerrard 86) Att: 29,553

Everton 1 (Ferguson 68)
Bolton 2 (Djorkaeff 15, 87) Att: 40,190

Leeds 3 (Kilgallon 29, Pennant 41, Smith pen 71)
Charlton 3 (Holland 8, Euell pen 76, 79) Att: 38,986

Leicester 3 (Taylor og 6, Dickov 27, Scowcroft 71)
Portsmouth 1 (Quashie 66) Att: 31,536

Manchester Utd 1 (Van Nistelrooy 77)
Chelsea 1 (Gronkjaer 19) Att: 67,609

Middlesbrough 2 (Maccarone 8, Nemeth 32)
Manchester City 1 (Wanchope 35) Att: 34,734

Southampton 1 (Phillips 45)
Aston Villa 1 (Angel pen 38) Att: 32,054

Tottenham 1 (Defoe 18)
Blackburn 0 Att: 35,698

Sunday, May 9

Fulham 0
Arsenal 1 (Reyes 9) Att: 18,102

Newcastle 1 (Bowyer 38)
Wolverhampton 1 (Ganea 70) Att: 52,139

Wednesday, May 12

Southampton 3 (Beattie 19, Bramble og 39, Griffit 88)
Newcastle 3 (Ameobi 7, Bowyer 35, Ambrose 90) Att: 31,815

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	37	25	12	0	71	25	87
Chelsea	37	23	7	7	66	30	76
Man Utd	37	22	6	9	62	35	72
Liverpool	37	16	11	10	54	36	59
Aston Villa	37	15	11	11	48	42	56
Newcastle	37	13	16	8	51	39	55
Bolton	37	14	11	12	48	54	53
Charlton	37	13	11	13	49	50	50
Fulham	37	13	10	14	50	46	49
Birmingham	37	12	13	12	42	47	49
Middlesbrough	37	13	9	15	43	47	48
Southampton	37	12	11	14	43	43	47
Blackburn	37	12	7	18	50	58	43
Portsmouth	37	11	9	17	42	53	42
Tottenham	37	12	6	19	45	57	42
Everton	37	9	12	16	44	52	39
Man City	37	8	14	15	50	53	38
Leicester	37	6	15	16	47	63	33
Wolverhampton	37	7	12	18	38	75	33
Leeds	37	8	9	20	40	78	33

LEADING GOALSCORERS
29 Thierry Henry (Arsenal)
22 Alan Shearer (Newcastle)
20 Louis Saha (Fulham/Manchester Utd)
19 Ruud Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd)

FA CUP – semi-finals

Apr 3: Arsenal 0 Manchester Utd 1.
Apr 4: Sunderland 0 Millwall 1.

FRANCE

Friday, April 2

Monaco 3 (Nonda 51, Plasil 67, Prso 90)
Ajaccio 3 (Loko 25, Robin 36, 41) Att: 7,119

Saturday, April 3

Bastia 2 (Diarra 28, Maurice 37)
Nice 1 (Meslin 40) Att: 5,749

Bordeaux 1 (Bassila og 89)
Strasbourg 1 (Le Pen pen 81) Att: 22,643

Lille 1 (Acimovic 56)
Rennes 0 Att: 13,829

Lyon 1 (Luyindula 18)
Marseille 2 (Drogba 4, Meriem 84) Att: 38,602

Metz 5 (Borbiconi 5, Maoulida 18, 51, 67, Thiaw 88)
Le Mans 0 Att: 13,807

Montpellier 1 (Bamogo 31)
Lens 0 Att: 12,937

Paris SG 3 (Armand og 35, Boskovic 69, Pauleta 76)
Nantes 2 (Pujol 16, Ziani 90) Att: 41,769

Toulouse 0
Sochaux 0 Att: 21,109

Sunday, April 4

Guingamp 2 (Dagano 32, Colleau 75)
Auxerre 2 (Sirieix 52, Kapo 90) Att: 15,000

Saturday, April 10

Ajaccio 0
Montpellier 0 Att: 4,000

Auxerre 2 (Cisse 53, Kalou 67)
Metz 1 (Maoulida 60) Att: 7,000

Le Mans 2 (Revault og 12, Pancrate 57)
Toulouse 1 (Faure 78) Att: 11,071

Lens 0
Monaco 0 Att: 40,011

Nantes 1 (Gillet 90)
Bastia 1 (Gourvennec 80) Att: 28,000

Nice 1 (Laslandes 16)
Paris SG 2 (Pierre-Fanfan 80, Sorin 88) Att: 12,971

Sochaux 2 (Pedretti 58, Ferrier og 82)
Guingamp 0 Att: 15,144

Sunday, April 11

Strasbourg 0
Lyon 1 (Luyindula 46) Att: 19,467

Friday, April 16

Guingamp 1 (Shereni 24)
Metz 1 (Le Crom og 9) Att: 16,549

Sunday, April 18

Marseille 2 (Marlet 45, Batiles 81)
Lille 1 (Bodmer 11) Att: 55,000

Rennes 3 (Sorlin 4, Kallstrom 57, Frei 69)
Bordeaux 1 (Chamakh 75) Att: 17,537

Saturday, April 24

Auxerre 2 (Kalou 49, Cisse 57)
Sochaux 1 (Mexes og 55) Att: 18,491

Bastia 0
Bordeaux 2 (Celades 38, Feindouno 49) Att: 5,595

Guingamp 1 (Leroy 5)
Lens 0 Att: 15,094

Lille 0
Strasbourg 1 (Makoun og 29) Att: 13,456

Lyon 3 (Juninho pen 57, Essien 63, Luyindula 71)
Rennes 0 Att: 39,869

Metz 1 (Proment pen 62)
Nice 0 Att: 17,579

Monaco 0
Nantes 1 (Vahirua 78) Att: 9,000

Montpellier 0
Le Mans 3 (D'Amico 17, Cousin 29, Pancrate 32) Att: 11,965

Toulouse 3 (Emana 41, Faure pen 65, Avezac 89)
Ajaccio 1 (Bagayoko 90) Att: 16,149

Sunday, April 25

Paris SG 2 (Pauleta 12, 62)
Marseille 1 (Batlles 90) Att: 46,000

Friday, April 30

Nice 1 (Varrault 11)
Monaco 2 (Prso 35, Giuly 45) Att: 13,107

Saturday, May 1

Ajaccio 0
Guingamp 0 Att: 2,236

Le Mans 2 (Boumsong og 5, Celdran 29)
Auxerre 1 (Cisse 47) Att: 14,033

Lens 1 (Moreira 22)
Toulouse 1 (Cardy 50) Att: 32,747

Marseille 0
Metz 1 (Meniri 26) Att: 52,128

Nantes 2 (Da Rocha 24, 44)
Lille 0 Att: 27,814

Rennes 4 (Kallstrom 13, Frei 16, 63, Sorlin 35)
Bastia 0 Att: 20,634

Sochaux 3 (Zairi 6, Frau 22, Santos 68)
Montpellier 1 (Bamogo 16) Att: 16,352

Strasbourg 0
Paris SG 0 Att: 25,385

Sunday, May 2

Bordeaux 1 (Chamakh 60)
Lyon 1 (Dhorasoo 87) Att: 35,000

Saturday, May 8

Auxerre 1 (Kalou 2)
Ajaccio 1 (Demont 89) Att: 8,710

Bastia 0
Strasbourg 0 Att: 4,850

Guingamp 2 (Eggen og 68, Leroy 69)
Le Mans 4 (Cousin 19, Pancrate 26, Eggen 58, Hautcoeur 90) Att: 16,441

Lille 2 (Acimovic pen 37, Manchev 50)
Bordeaux 1 (Alicarte pen 74) Att: 14,611

Metz 1 (Maoulida 10)
Lyon 2 (Juninho 23, Elber 76) Att: 24,778

Montpellier 2 (Bamogo 38, Lafourcade 70)
Nice 2 (Ba 24, Godemeche og 82) Att: 8,905

Paris SG 1 (Dehu 61)
Rennes 0 Att: 41,444

Sochaux 0
Lens 3 (Coridon 30, Moreira 40, Thomert 61) Att: 19,791

Toulouse 0
Nantes 1 (Pujol 75) Att: 21,195

Sunday, May 9

Monaco 1 (Giuly 90)
Marseille 0 Att: 20,000

Tuesday, May 11

Bordeaux 3 (Feindouno 21, 50, Chamakh 75)
Paris SG 0 Att: 30,527

Lens 1 (Coulibaly 34)
Auxerre 3 (Lachuer 22, Mathis 74, Cisse 89) Att: 31,249

Wednesday, May 12

Ajaccio 1 (Demont 15)
Sochaux 0 Att: 4,000

Le Mans 1 (Fanchone pen 44)
Lille 1 (Acimovic 34) Att: 14,072

Lyon 1 (Juninho 26)
Bastia 0 Att: 38,723

Marseille 1 (Marlet 31)
Montpellier 1 (Mansare 66) Att: 47,000

Nantes 0
Guingamp 0 Att: 29,284

Nice 1 (Ba 62)
Toulouse 1 (Fernandao 5) Att: 9,663

Rennes 0
Metz 0 Att: 22,143

Strasbourg 0
Monaco 0 Att: 25,590

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lyon	36	23	7	6	61	25	76
Monaco	36	20	12	4	55	25	72
Paris SG	36	20	10	6	48	28	70
Auxerre	36	18	7	11	57	33	61
Sochaux	36	17	9	10	50	39	60
Nantes	36	16	9	11	44	32	57
Marseille	36	16	6	14	48	42	54
Bordeaux	36	13	11	12	38	37	50
Lens	36	14	8	14	32	45	50
Lille	36	13	9	14	39	38	48
Rennes	36	12	10	14	48	43	46
Nice	36	10	16	10	39	37	46
Strasbourg	36	9	12	15	41	49	39
Metz	36	10	9	17	30	38	39
Bastia	36	9	12	15	33	46	39
Guingamp	36	10	8	18	34	54	38
Ajaccio	36	9	10	17	30	52	37
Toulouse	36	8	11	17	29	43	35
Le Mans	36	8	11	17	32	54	35
Montpellier	36	8	7	21	40	68	31

LEADING GOALSCORERS
24 Djibril Cisse (Auxerre)
18 Didier Drogba (Marseille)
16 Pierre-Alain Frau (Sochaux)
16 Alexander Frei (Rennes)
16 Pauleta (Paris SG)

FRENCH CUP – semi-finals

Apr 28: Nantes 1 Paris SG 1 (aet; Paris SG 4-3 on pens); Chateauroux 2 Dijon 0.

LEAGUE CUP – Final

Apr 17 - Stade de France, Saint-Denis
Nantes 1 (Pujol 14)
Sochaux 1 (Monsoreau 19)
Aet. **HT:** 1-1. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 78,341. **Ref:** Garibian
Sochaux 5-4 on pens

GERMANY

Saturday, April 3

Hertha 1 (Pinto 59)
Hansa Rostock 1 (Rasmussen 65) Att: 47,305

Kaiserslautern 0
Bayern Munich 2 (Makaay 46, Santa Cruz 76) Att: 47,315

Koln 2 (Hertzsch og 5, Podolski 35)
Eintracht Frankfurt 0 Att: 45,500

Monchengladbach 0
Bayer Leverkusen 0 Att: 34,200

1860 Munich 0
Hannover 2 (Zuraw 71, Brdaric 74) Att: 26,700

Schalke 4 (Waldoch 10, Sand 29, Lamotte 42, Delura 55)
Hamburg 1 (Mahdavikia pen 35) Att: 61,266

Wolfsburg 1 (Petrov 30)
Stuttgart 5 (Gerber 6, Streller 26, Lahm 43, Kuranyi 75, Szabics 87) Att: 25,396

Sunday, April 4

Borussia Dortmund 4 (Koller 9, Gambino 21, Frings 45, Ewerthon pen 53)
Bochum 1 (Madsen 11) Att: 81,000

Werder Bremen 1 (Ailton 18)
Freiburg 1 (Kruppke 1) Att: 42,500

Saturday, April 10

Bayer Leverkusen 6 (Wenzel og 2, Berbatov 22, Lucio 34, Franca 38, 55, Basturk 48)
Kaiserslautern 0 Att: 22,500

Bayern Munich 2 (Makaay 8, 64)
Schalke 1 (Vermant pen 4) Att: 63,000

Bochum 4 (Hashemian 26, 40, Madsen 61, Diabang 81)
1860 Munich 0 Att: 23,430

Eintracht Frankfurt 0
Werder Bremen 1 (Ismael pen 80) Att: 33,400

Hamburg 0
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Frings 8, Koller 28) Att: 52,204

Hansa Rostock 1 (Rydlewicz 28)
Monchengladbach 2 (Van Hout 30, Ulich 84) Att: 25,800

Hertha 1 (Rafael 22)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 33,970

Sunday, April 11

Freiburg 0
Stuttgart 1 (Kuranyi 10) Att: 25,000

Hannover 1 (Brdaric 34)
Koln 0 Att: 27,200

Saturday, April 17

Borussia Dortmund 2 (Ewerthon pen 56, Worns 61)
Bayern Munich 0 Att: 83,000

Kaiserslautern 3 (Bjelica 32, Hristov 36, Lokvenc 75)
Hansa Rostock 2 (Rydlewicz 38, pen 71) Att: 34,884

Monchengladbach 1 (Ulich 86)
Hertha 1 (Pinto 9) Att: 34,500

1860 Munich 1 (Agostino 87)
Hamburg 2 (Santos og 65, Mahdavikia 79) Att: 26,400

Schalke 2 (Nowotny og 56, Hanke 77)
Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Berbatov 30, Schneider 72, Butt pen 77) Att: 61,266

Stuttgart 3 (Kuranyi 44, Hleb 50, Bordon 80)
Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Schur 85) Att: 48,000

Wolfsburg 4 (Franz 10, Fernando Baiano 20, Sarpei 47, Klimowicz 68)
Freiburg 0 Att: 16,276

Sunday, April 18

Koln 1 (Podolski 54)
Bochum 2 (Wosz 30, Fahrenhorst 65) Att: 40,000

Werder Bremen 0
Hannover 0 Att: 43,000

Saturday, April 24

Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Babic 6, Franca 22, Berbatov pen 54)
Borussia Dortmund 0 Att: 22,500

Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (Skela pen 29, Preuss 45, Beierle 72)
Freiburg 0 Att: 25,300

Hamburg 4 (Rahn 41, Barbarez 52, Jarolim 64, Fukal 68)
Koln 2 (Podolski 44, Springer 83) Att: 43,000

Hannover 0
Stuttgart 1 (Meissner 11) Att: 27,537

Hansa Rostock 3 (Tjikuzu 35, Max 62, 68)
Schalke 1 (Asamoah 10) Att: 26,000

Hertha 3 (Marcelinho 2, Wichniarek 16, Bobic 24)
Kaiserslautern 0 Att: 45,292

Monchengladbach 0
Wolfsburg 2 (Fernando Baiano 44, Karhan 65) Att: 33,600

Sunday, April 25

Bayern Munich 1 (Santa Cruz 50)
1860 Munich 0 Att: 69,000

Bochum 0
Werder Bremen 0 Att: 32,645

Saturday, May 1

Borussia Dortmund 4 (Madouni 11, Ewerthon 35, Koller 38, Odonkor 77)
Hansa Rostock 1 (Max 67) Att: 82,500

Freiburg 4 (Riether 14, Bajramovic 51, Iashvili 69, 78)
Hannover 1 (Brdaric 52) Att: 25,000

Kaiserslautern 2 (Altintop 3, Hristov 47)
Monchengladbach 2 (Broich 51, Demo 90) Att: 47,018

Koln 1 (Podolski 24)
Bayern Munich 2 (Pizarro 40, Schweinsteiger 75) Att: 50,200

1860 Munich 1 (Agostino 4)
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Schneider 48) Att: 34,200

Werder Bremen 6 (Barbarez og 17, Ismael 22, Klasnic 39, Ailton 48, Hadeo Valdez 81, Skripnik 85)
Hamburg 0 Att: 42,500

Wolfsburg 1 (Klimowicz 18)
Eintracht Frankfurt 0 Att: 24,573

Sunday, May 2

Schalke 3 (Altintop 18, Bohme 51, Sand 59)
Hertha 0 Att: 61,266

Stuttgart 1 (Cacau 31)
Bochum 1 (Meichelbeck 58) Att: 48,000

Saturday, May 8

Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Fritz 20, Franca 74)
Koln 0 Att: 22,500

Bayern Munich 1 (Makaay 55)
Werder Bremen 3 (Klasnic 19, Micoud 26, Ailton 35) Att: 65,000

Hamburg 2 (Beinlich 38, Hoogma 47)
Stuttgart 1 (Cacau 86) Att: 55,128

Hannover 3 (Brdaric 42, 75, Idrissou 89)
Eintracht Frankfurt 0 Att: 27,537

Hertha 6 (Kehl og 7, Marcelinho 19, Bobic 37 Wichniarek 57, Neuendorf 86, Rafael 90)
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Ewerthon 52, 80) Att: 56,307

Kaiserslautern 3 (Lokvenc 57, 72, Bjelica 75)
Wolfsburg 2 (Klimowicz 65, Petrov 66) Att: 40,000

Monchengladbach 2 (Hausweiler 1, Sverkos pen 44)
Schalke 0 Att: 34,500

Sunday, May 9

Bochum 3 (Madsen 2, Hashemian 53, Cairo og 68)
Freiburg 0 Att: 29,474

Hansa Rostock 3 (Max 15, Rydlewicz pen 48, Tjikuzu 83)
1860 Munich 0 Att: 23,000

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Werder Bremen	32	22	8	2	76	29	74
Bayern Munich	32	19	8	5	67	36	65
Stuttgart	32	17	10	5	49	21	61
B Leverkusen	32	17	8	7	65	37	59
Bochum	32	14	11	7	52	35	53
B Dortmund	32	15	6	11	55	46	51
Schalke	32	12	10	10	44	40	46
Hamburg	32	13	6	13	45	59	45
Hansa Rostock	32	11	8	13	52	49	41
Wolfsburg	32	13	1	18	55	60	40
Freiburg	32	10	7	15	42	65	37
M'gladbach	32	9	9	14	36	45	36
Hannover	32	9	9	14	48	60	36
Hertha	32	8	11	13	38	57	35
Kaiserslautern	32	11	5	16	37	57	35
1860 Munich	32	8	7	17	30	51	31
Eintracht F'furt	32	8	5	19	32	49	29
Koln	32	5	5	22	27	54	20

**3pts deducted for failing to supply accurate information when re-applying for professional licence*

LEADING GOALSCORERS
27 Ailton (Werder Bremen)
23 Roy Makaay (Bayern Munich)
20 Martin Max (Hansa Rostock)

GREECE

Apr 3: Halkidona 2 Panionios 2; Aigaleo 2 Xanthi 1.
Apr 4: OFI 0 Paniliakos 0; Aris 0 Panathinaikos 2; Kallithea 3 Proodeftiki 1; Olympiakos 3 Iraklis 0; AEK 1 Akratitos 1; PAOK 2 Ionikos 0.
Apr 17: Proodeftiki 2 AEK 4; Akratitos 3 Ionikos 0.
Apr 18: Halkidona 0 Aigaleo 1; Xanthi 1 OFI 0; Panionios 2 Aris 1; Paniliakos 0 Kallithea 5; Panathinaikos 2 Olympiakos 2; Iraklis 3 PAOK 0.
Apr 24: Kallithea 3 Xanthi 1; AEK 1 Paniliakos 0.
Apr 25: Aigaleo 1 OFI 0; Olympiakos 2 Panionios 0; PAOK 1 Panathinaikos 2; Ionikos 2 Proodeftiki 1; Akratitos 1 Iraklis 0; Aris 3 Halkidona 0.
May 1: Xanthi 1 AEK 2.
May 2: Aris 1 Aigaleo 0; OFI 0 Kallithea 0; Halkidona 0 Olympiakos 1; Panionios 1 PAOK 0; Paniliakos 2 Ionikos 2; Panathinaikos 5 Akratitos 1; Proodeftiki 3 Iraklis 2.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Panathinaikos	28	22	5	1	59	17	71
Olympiakos	28	22	3	3	64	18	69
PAOK	28	17	5	6	44	25	56
AEK	28	15	6	7	52	29	51
Aigaleo	28	15	6	7	35	22	51
Panionios	28	11	10	7	36	27	43
Halkidona	28	12	6	10	36	36	42
Iraklis	28	11	5	12	39	39	38
Xanthi	28	8	6	14	28	40	30
OFI	28	7	7	14	24	40	28
Ionikos	28	7	6	15	30	42	27
Kallithea	28	5	11	12	35	38	26
Aris	28	7	5	16	23	42	26
Akratitos	28	5	7	16	29	65	22
Paniliakos	28	4	8	16	28	55	20
Proodeftiki	28	4	8	16	24	51	20

HOLLAND

Friday, April 2

NEC 4 (Wielaert pen 5, Tumba 15, Hersi 60, 79)
Willem II 0 Att: 12,000

Saturday, April 3

AZ 2 (Meerdink 52, Nelisse 58)
Vitesse 1 (Amoah 75) Att: 7,991

RBC 1 (De Graaf 1)
Zwolle 1 (Zuurman 27) Att: 5,000

RKC 0
PSV 4 (Vennegoor of Hesselink 8, Kezman 52, 82, Park 59) Att: 7,200

Roda JC 0
Heerenveen 1 (Vayrynen 88) Att: 12,318

Twente 1 (Ramzi 53)
Volendam 2 (Buys pen 66, Esajas 88) Att: 12,800

Sunday, April 4

Ajax 2 (Van der Vaart 57, Heitinga 85)
Groningen 1 (Salmon 75) Att: 49,212

NAC 0
Feyenoord 3 (Van den Berg 51, Buffel 66, Barakat og 73) Att: 15,900

Utrecht 5 (Zwaanswijk 5, 35, Van den Bergh 18, 63, De Groot 71)
Den Haag 3 (El-Akchaoui 2, Stroeve 16, Castelen 43) Att: 18,200

Friday, April 9

Roda JC 4 (Redan 31, 87, Filipovic 54, Kone 56)
NEC 0 Att: 12,225

Saturday, April 10

Den Haag 1 (Saeijs pen 80)
RKC 3 (Oost 25, Fuchs 68, Vasconcelos 85) Att: 6,437

Heerenveen 4 (Sibon 23, 28, 30, Hakansson 55)
Utrecht 0 Att: 15,500

Volendam 0
Willem II 1 (Denissen 87) Att: 5,000

Zwolle 2 (Van Dinteren 18, Lim-Duan 59)
AZ 0 Att: 6,750

Sunday, April 11

Feyenoord 1 (Kuijt 89)
Ajax 1 (Ibrahimovic 68) Att: 43,000

PSV 5 (Kezman 6, 32, 56, Vennegoor of Hesselink 76, Vonlanthen 90)
Groningen 0 Att: 32,500

RBC 1 (Pothuizen og 1)
Twente 2 (Ramzi 52, Cziommer 63) Att: 5,000

Vitesse 2 (Janssen 67, Zongo 70)
NAC 2 (Diba 16, Engelaar 40) Att: 19,685

Friday, April 16

Willem II 1 (Van den Eede 48)
Vitesse 1 (Amoah 78) Att: 13,400

Saturday, April 17

Den Haag 1 (Stroeve 21)
Twente 0 Att: 7,123

PSV 3 (Kezman pen 38, 85, Van Bommel 89)
NEC 0 Att: 33,500

RKC 1 (Boutahar 40)
Roda JC 1 (Luijpers 90) Att: 6,000

Zwolle 1 (Zuurman 45)
Heerenveen 0 Att: 6,750

Sunday, April 18

Ajax 1 (Van der Vaart 30)
RBC 1 (Hellemons 3) Att: 48,000

Groningen 1 (Smit 56)
AZ 1 (Wijker 88) Att: 11,618

Utrecht 0
Feyenoord 3 (Smolarek 52, 76, Kuijt 63) Att: 18,000

Volendam 4 (Buys 16, Bridji 45, 74, Steur 70)
NAC 2 (Boukhari 10, Boussaboun 12) Att: 4,552

Friday, April 23

Roda JC 1 (Cristiano 90)
Utrecht 1 (Tanghe 13) Att: 13,230

Saturday, April 24

AZ 7 (Meerdink 22, 29, 60, Perez 50, Landzaat 52, Nelisse 56, 65)
RKC 0 Att: 7,713

Heerenveen 0
Vitesse 0 Att: 14,400

RBC 0
PSV 3 (Van Bommel 13, Kezman pen 22, Rommedahl 88) Att: 5,000

Twente 2 (Gakhokidze 55, N'Kufo 88)
Willem II 0 Att: 13,110

Sunday, April 25

Feyenoord 2 (Smolarek 44, Kuijt pen 75)
Volendam 0 Att: 42,000

Groningen 2 (Van Gessel 20, Matthijs 45)
Zwolle 2 (Van der Haar 71, Mauro Almeida 85) Att: 12,130

NAC 1 (Feher 3)
Den Haag 0 Att: 11,231

NEC 0
Ajax 0 Att: 13,000

Saturday, May 1

AZ 2 (Meerdink 34, Landzaat 38)
NAC 2 (Boussaboun 57, Diba 77) Att: 7,762

Den Haag 1 (Hofstede 48)
Heerenveen 0 Att: 10,000

Twente 1 (Ramzi 34)
Roda JC 2 (Vicelich 12, Cristiano 82) Att: 13,000

Willem II 3 (Caluwe pen 30, 60, Denneboom 83)
RBC 0 Att: 13,510

Sunday, May 2

Feyenoord 1 (Kuijt 56)
Groningen 2 (Drent 87, 90) Att: 39,600

RKC 1 (Hoogendorp 63)
Utrecht 0 Att: 5,300

Vitesse 2 (Hofs 53, 89)
NEC 2 (Hersi 76, 84) Att: 21,640

Volendam 0
PSV 5 (Ooijer 12, De Jong 51, 58, Kezman 59, 87) Att: 4,800

Zwolle 0
Ajax 5 (Galasek 36, Sonck 56, 78, 82, Sneijder 80) Att: 6,800

Sunday, May 9

Ajax 2 (Sneijder 10, Ibrahimovic 43)
NAC 0 Att: 49,917

Heerenveen 1 (Sibon 80)
AZ 0 Att: 16,180

NEC 1 (Hersi 61)
Volendam 1 (Esajas 44) Att: 12,000

PSV 3 (Park 30, Kezman 56, Bouma 82)
Den Haag 2 (Castelen 63, Stroeve 75) Att: 34,000

RBC 1 (Youssouf 20)
Feyenoord 4 (Kuijt 18, Buffel 36, Paauwe 74, Smolarek 80) Att: 4,980

RKC 3 (Vasconcelos 25, Van Diemen 68, Petrovic 90)
Twente 3 (N'Kufo 41, Ramzi 61, Christensen 86) Att: 5,500

Roda JC 2 (Van Dessel 6, Cristiano 28)
Vitesse 0 Att: 13,813

Utrecht 2 (Zwaanswijk 43, Calabro 51)
Groningen 0 Att: 19,100

Zwolle 0
Willem II 0 Att: 6,000

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax	33	24	5	4	74	29	77
PSV	33	22	5	6	88	28	71
Feyenoord	33	19	8	6	64	37	65
Heerenveen	33	17	7	9	45	33	58
AZ	33	17	6	10	63	38	57
Roda JC	33	14	10	9	58	39	52
Willem II	33	13	10	10	45	49	49
Utrecht	33	13	7	13	42	49	46
Twente	33	14	3	16	54	53	45
NAC	33	11	10	12	53	52	43
RKC	33	10	10	13	44	50	40
RBC	33	10	10	13	33	45	40
Groningen	33	9	9	15	36	51	36
NEC	33	10	4	19	43	58	34
Den Haag	33	8	7	18	32	60	31
Zwolle	33	5	11	17	26	60	26
Vitesse	33	3	16	14	36	56	25
Volendam	33	6	6	21	29	78	24

LEADING GOALSCORER
28 Mateja Kezman (PSV)

HUNGARY

Regular season

Apr 3: Debrecen 2 MTK 2; Matav 5 Videoton 0; Pecs 1 Haladas 1; Zalaegerszeg 1 Balaton 1; Ujpest 3 Bekescsaba 1.
Apr 4: Ferencvaros 4 Gyor 0.
Apr 7: Bekescsaba 3 Matav 3; Haladas 0 Ferencvaros 1; MTK 0 Ujpest 1; Balaton 2 Pecs 0; Videoton 2 Zalaegerszeg 2; Gyor 1 Debrecen 5.

HUNGARY – REGULAR SEASON – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ferencvaros	22	12	8	2	29	15	44
Balaton	22	12	5	5	24	11	41
Debrecen	22	11	6	5	34	17	39
MTK	22	10	8	4	35	21	38
Ujpest	22	9	8	5	32	22	35
Matav	22	8	7	7	35	28	31
Pecs	22	6	9	7	19	21	27
Videoton	22	5	8	9	27	37	23
Zalaegerszeg	22	5	5	12	24	35	20
Gyor	22	5	5	12	23	38	20
Bekescsaba	22	4	7	11	23	34	19
Haladas	22	3	8	11	12	38	17

Top six went into championship play-offs; bottom six into relegation play-offs

Championship play-offs

Apr 10: Ferencvaros 3 Matav 0; Balaton 0 MTK 0.
Apr 11: Debrecen 2 Ujpest 0.
Apr 17: Matav 2 Debrecen 3; Ujpest 1 Balaton 1.
Apr 18: MTK 1 Ferencvaros 0.
Apr 21: Ferencvaros 0 Balaton 4; Debrecen 2 MTK 2; Ujpest 2 Matav 1.
May 1: Balaton 1 Debrecen 1; MTK 1 Matav 2; Ferencvaros 0 Ujpest 1.
May 8: Matav 1 Balaton 0; Ujpest 5 MTK 1.
May 9: Debrecen 3 Ferencvaros 2.
May 12: Ujpest 3 Debrecen 0; Matav 2 Ferencvaros 2; MTK 0 Balaton 2.

HUNGARY – CHAMP'SHIP PLAY-OFFS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Debrecen	28	14	8	6	45	27	50
Balaton	28	14	8	6	32	14	50
Ujpest	28	13	9	6	44	27	48
Ferencvaros	28	13	9	6	36	26	48
MTK	28	11	10	7	40	32	43
Matav	28	10	8	10	43	39	38

ITALY

Sunday, April 4

Ancona 0
Sampdoria 1 (Bazzani 18) Att: 10,199

Bologna 2 (Locatelli 42, Bellucci 65)
Reggina 2 (Di Michele 7, Stellone 29) Att: 21,619

Chievo 0
Parma 2 (Marchionni 30, Gilardino 71) Att: 11,047

Empoli 1 (Rocchi 63)
Perugia 0 Att: 6,098

Inter 3 (Martins 5, Vieri pen 45, Stankovic 47)
Juventus 2 (K Gonzalez og 25, Di Vaio 90) Att: 72,029

Lazio 5 (Cesar 3, 45, 49, Fiore 28, Corradi 78)
Siena 2 (Guigou 10, Taddei 23) Att: 45,350

Lecce 0
Roma 3 (Emerson 50, Bovo og 54, Totti pen 90)
Att: 16,266

Modena 1 (Amoruso 50)
Milan 1 (Tomasson 38) Att: 18,575

Udinese 4 (Iaquinta 1, 26, Fava 11, 80)
Brescia 3 (Baggio 45, Di Biagio 46, Maniero 57)
Att: 16,986

Saturday, April 10

Ancona 3 (Rapajic 26, 56, Bucchi 51)
Bologna 2 (Nakata pen 12, Tare 64) Att: 10,181

Brescia 0
Modena 0 Att: 11,545

Juventus 1 (Trezeguet 88)
Lazio 0 Att: 31,190

Milan 1 (Pirlo pen 86)
Empoli 0 Att: 61,964

Parma 3 (Carbone 1, Gilardino 42, 84)
Lecce 1 (Chevanton 63) Att: 13,095

Reggina 0
Udinese 1 (Iaquinta 77) Att: 19,541

Roma 3 (Carew 29, Cassano 60, Barzagli og 77)
Chievo 1 (Cossato 32) Att: 40,915

Siena 0
Sampdoria 0 Att: 11,623

Sunday, April 11

Perugia 2 (Di Francesco 50, Hubner 58)
Inter 3 (Adriano 24, 86, Martins 88) Att: 13,500

Saturday, April 17

Lecce 2 (Cassetti 44, Chevanton 85)
Udinese 1 (Jorgensen 23) Att: 22,059

Siena 1 (Chiesa pen 38)
Milan 2 (Shevchenko 26, Kaka 80) Att: 13,090

Sunday, April 18

Chievo 0
Reggina 0 Att: 9,964

Empoli 1 (Gasparetto 78)
Brescia 1 (Ficini og 37) Att: 6,254

Inter 4 (Recoba 32, Cannavaro 53, Stankovic 55, Martins 70)
Bologna 2 (Bellucci 67, 76) Att: 53,216

Lazio 4 (Fernando Couto 12, 81, Fiore 73, Zauri 89)
Ancona 2 (Bucchi 11, Andersson 64) Att: 44,044

Modena 0
Roma 1 (Totti 54) Att: 15,690

Parma 2 (Carbone 35, Gilardino 80)
Juventus 2 (Di Vaio 78, Tudor 90) Att: 20,501

Sampdoria 3 (Diana 38, Flachi 44, 87)
Perugia 2 (Ze Maria 46, Ravanelli 84) Att: 23,060

Wednesday, April 21

Lazio 1 (Corradi 40)
Roma 1 (Totti pen 61) Att: 52,000

Sunday, April 25

Ancona 0
Chievo 2 (Sala 56, Semioli 79) Att: 7,500

Bologna 3 (Dalla Bona 32, Bellucci 62, Nervo 82)
Siena 1 (Mignani 68) Att: 14,558

Brescia 1 (Baggio 44)
Perugia 1 (Ravanelli 38) Att: 12,500

Inter 0
Lazio 0 Att: 54,778

Juventus 3 (Trezeguet 1, Maresca 56, Del Piero 79)
Lecce 4 (Franceschini 22, Konan 28, 42, Chevanton 52) Att: 31,198

Modena 1 (Kamara 58)
Sampdoria 0 Att: 9,500

Reggina 1 (Torrisi 47)
Parma 1 (Bresciano 7) Att: 19,000

Roma 3 (Totti 40, 89, Carew 65)
Empoli 0 Att: 48,456

Udinese 0
Milan 0 Att: 15,021

Sunday, May 2

Chievo 2 (Sala 69, Amauri 89)
Modena 0 Att: 13,715

Empoli 2 (Belleri 40, Vannucchi 74)
Bologna 0 Att: 6,471

Lazio 1 (Claudio Lopez 23)
Reggina 1 (Cozza pen 53) Att: 50,098

Lecce 2 (Tonetto 47, Bovo 70)
Inter 1 (Adriano 36) Att: 21,296

Milan 1 (Shevchenko 2)
Roma 0 Att: 76,647

Parma 3 (Gilardino 9, Carbone 16, Bresciano 30)
Ancona 1 (Bucchi 33) Att: 12,755

Perugia 1 (Ravanelli 49)
Juventus 0 Att: 11,108

Sampdoria 1 (Bazzani 51)
Udinese 3 (Jankulovski 28, Pizarro pen 58, Iaquinta 87) Att: 26,734

Siena 0
Brescia 1 (Brighi 60) Att: 11,298

Sunday, May 9

Ancona 2 (Milanese 19, Sommese pen 73)
Empoli 1 (Vannucchi 68) Att: 4,500

Bologna 1 (Tare 34)
Lecce 1 (Chevanton 90) Att: 22,000

Brescia 2 (Mauri 81, Baggio 89)
Lazio 1 (Cesar 90) Att: 15,000

Inter 1 (Adriano 62)
Parma 0 Att: 56,000

Juventus 2 (Legrottaglie 37, Appiah 44)
Sampdoria 0 Att: 31,866

Modena 1 (Marazzina 84)
Siena 3 (Taddei 42, 81, Chiesa 90) Att: 7,437

Reggina 2 (Di Michele 8, Cozza pen 30)
Milan 1 (Shevchenko 51) Att: 23,000

Roma 1 (Cassano 12)
Perugia 3 (Ze Maria 18, pen 24, Ravanelli 83) Att: 5,000

Udinese 1 (Iaquinta 45)
Chievo 1 (Cossato 32) Att: 18,000

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Milan	33	24	7	2	61	22	79
Roma	33	21	7	5	68	19	70
Juventus	33	20	6	7	64	41	66
Inter	33	16	8	9	56	35	56
Parma	33	15	10	8	53	43	55
Lazio	33	15	8	10	50	37	53
Udinese	33	13	11	9	41	36	50
Sampdoria	33	11	12	10	40	42	45
Chievo	33	10	11	12	34	36	41
Brescia	33	9	13	11	50	53	40
Bologna	33	10	9	14	44	51	39
Lecce	33	10	8	15	41	55	38
Siena	33	8	10	15	40	51	34
Reggina	33	6	16	11	28	43	34
Modena	33	6	12	15	26	44	30
Empoli	33	7	9	17	24	51	30
Perugia	33	5	14	14	43	56	29
Ancona	33	2	7	24	21	69	13

LEADING GOALSCORERS
23 Andrii Shevchenko (Milan)
20 Francesco Totti (Roma)
19 Alberto Gilardino (Parma)
18 Javier Chevanton (Lecce)

ITALIAN CUP – Final, 2nd leg

May 12 - Stadio Delle Alpi, Turin
Juventus 2 (Trezeguet 20, Del Piero 46)
Lazio 2 (Corradi 69, Fiore 83)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 38,849. **Ref:** Paparesta
Lazio 4-2 on agg

NORWAY

Apr 12: Lillestrom 2 Fredrikstad 0; Molde 2 Lyn 0; Odd Grenland 2 Stabaek 0; Sogndal 1 Ham-Kam 1; Tromso 4 Viking 0; Rosenborg 1 Brann 0.
Apr 13: Valerenga 1 Bodo/Glimt 0.
Apr 18: Bodo/Glimt 0 Odd Grenland 2; Ham-Kam 1 Tromso 1; Stabaek 3 Sogndal 1; Brann 3 Molde 0; Fredrikstad 0 Rosenborg 2.
Apr 19: Lyn 1 Valerenga 1.
Apr 25: Ham-Kam 0 Stabaek 0; Molde 0 Fredrikstad 1; Odd Grenland 0 Lyn 0; Sogndal 1 Bodo/Glimt 2; Rosenborg 0 Viking 0; Tromso 1 Lillestrom 0; Valerenga 1 Brann 0.
May 1: Viking 1 Molde 1.
May 2: Bodo/Glimt 0 Ham-Kam 2; Brann 1 Odd Grenland 1; Lyn 2 Sogndal 0; Stabaek 1 Tromso 2; Lillestrom 2 Rosenborg 2.
May 3: Fredrikstad 2 Valerenga 2.
May 9: Ham-Kam 1 Lyn 0; Molde 2 Lillestrom 2; Odd Grenland 5 Fredrikstad 2; Stabaek 2 Bodo/Glimt 5; Sogndal 3 Brann 1; Valerenga 0 Viking 0.
May 10: Tromso 4 Rosenborg 1.
May 12: Viking 1 Lillestrom 1.

NORWAY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tromso	5	4	1	0	12	3	13
Odd Grenland	5	3	2	0	10	3	11
Ham-Kam	5	2	3	0	5	2	9
Valerenga	5	2	3	0	5	3	9
Rosenborg	5	2	2	1	6	6	8
Lillestrom	5	1	3	1	7	6	6
Bodo/Glimt	5	2	0	3	7	8	6
Lyn	5	1	2	2	3	4	5
Molde	5	1	2	2	5	7	5
Brann	5	1	1	3	5	6	4
Sogndal	5	1	1	3	6	9	4
Stabaek	5	1	1	3	6	10	4
Viking	5	0	4	1	2	6	4
Fredrikstad	5	1	1	3	5	11	4

POLAND

Apr 3: Gornik L 2 Widzew 1; Lech 0 Legia 1; Polonia 3 Groclin 1; Odra 1 Katowice 0; Gornik P 1 Wisla P 2; Gornik Z 1 Swit 0.
Apr 4: Wisla K 2 Amica 1.
Apr 8: Legia 3 Gornik P 0.
Apr 10: Amica 2 Gornik Z 0; Swit 3 Odra 1; Polonia 1 Widzew 1; Groclin 2 Lech 4; Wisla P 4 Wisla K 4; Katowice 1 Gornik L 1.
Apr 16: Gornik P 0 Groclin 3.
Apr 17: Gornik L 0 Odra 1; Wisla K 1 Legia 0; Polonia 1 Katowice 0; Gornik Z 1 Wisla P 1; Amica 2 Swit 2.
Apr 18: Lech 1 Widzew 1.
Apr 23: Groclin 1 Wisla K 6.
Apr 24: Wisla P 3 Amica 1; Odra 1 Polonia 0; Katowice 1 Lech 2; Swit 1 Gornik L 0; Widzew 2 Gornik P 0.
Apr 25: Legia 2 Gornik Z 0.
May 2: Wisla K 3 Widzew 1.
May 3: Lech 2 Odra 0; Amica 0 Legia 1; Gornik Z 2 Groclin 2; Polonia 3 Gornik L 0; Gornik P 0 Katowice 0; Wisla P 2 Swit 0.
May 7: Groclin 1 Amica 1.
May 8: Widzew 1 Gornik Z 2; Swit 2 Polonia 1; Gornik L 1 Lech 2; Odra 0 Gornik P 1; Legia 2 Wisla P 0.
May 9: Katowice 0 Wisla K 2.

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wisla K	22	18	1	3	64	26	55
Legia	22	15	5	2	41	14	50
Amica	22	12	5	5	39	23	41
Groclin	22	10	6	6	50	28	36
Wisla P	22	9	7	6	37	34	34
Lech	22	8	6	8	38	31	30
Gornik Z	22	7	8	7	23	28	29
Odra	22	8	4	10	23	32	28
Gornik L	22	8	3	11	20	35	27
Katowice	22	6	5	11	16	36	23
Polonia	22	5	7	10	22	34	22
Swit	22	4	6	12	18	36	18
Widzew	22	3	7	12	23	36	16
Gornik P	22	4	4	14	14	35	16

PORTUGAL

Friday, April 2

Alverca 0
Guimaraes 1 (Nuno Assis 59)

Saturday, April 3

Boavista 1 (Fary 27)
Estrela Amadora 2 (Alex Garcia 17, Miran 84)

Gil Vicente 2 (Gaspar 63, Luis Coentrao 66)
FC Porto 0

Sunday, April 4

Beira Mar 0
Academica 0

Moreirense 2 (Tito 27, Lito 76)
Nacional 1 (Serginho Baiano 47)

Pacos Ferreira 1 (Ze Manuel 79)
Uniao Leiria 2 (Fredy 48, Luis Filipe 84)

Rio Ave 1 (Evandro 50)
Benfica 1 (Tiago 55)

Sporting Braga 2 (Henrique 76, 85)
Sporting Lisbon 3 (Silva 11, Liedson 30, Pedro Barbosa pen 67)

Monday, April 5

Maritimo 2 (Alan 6, Van der Gaag 43)
Belenenses 0

Friday, April 9

Moreirense 2 (Demetrios 34, Paulo Turra og 60)
Boavista 1 (Ricardo Sousa 88)

Saturday, April 10

Academica 4 (Joeano 35, Tonel 51, Marinescu 68, Alvim 84)
Alverca 0

Benfica 2 (Nuno Gomes 47, Geovanni 86)
Pacos Ferreira 1 (Ze Manuel 66)

Guimaraes 2 (Djurdjevic 9, Rubens Junior 80)
Rio Ave 0

Nacional 2 (Serginho Baiano 38, Rossato 76)
Gil Vicente 1 (Yuri 5)

FC Porto 1 (Ricardo Carvalho 85)
Maritimo 0

Sporting Lisbon 4 (Liedson 32, 59, 82, Niculae 78)
Estrela Amadora 0

Uniao Leiria 2 (Fredy 24, Renato 81)
Sporting Braga 2 (Paulo Jorge 11, Paulo Sergio 53)

Monday, April 12

Belenenses 1 (Antchouet 14)
Beira Mar 0

Wednesday, April 14

Nacional 0
FC Porto 0

Saturday, April 17

Boavista 2 (Frechaut 83, Fary 87)
Sporting Lisbon 1 (Liedson 59)

Estrela Amadora 0
Uniao Leiria 0

Sporting Braga 0
Benfica 3 (Miguel 2, Sokota 24, Simao 30)

Sunday, April 18

Alverca 1 (Alex Afonso 45)
Belenenses 0

Beira Mar 0
FC Porto 0

Gil Vicente 1 (Josiesley Ferreira 12)
Moreirense 0

Pacos Ferreira 1 (Ze Manuel 85)
Guimaraes 0

Rio Ave 3 (Tixier og 15, Van Es 70, Niquinha 75)
Academica 2 (Joeano 13, 18)

Monday, April 19

Maritimo 2 (Pepe 17, Chainho 90)
Nacional 0

Friday, April 23

Gil Vicente 0
Boavista 1 (Fary 90)

Saturday, April 24

Benfica 3 (Nuno Gomes 15, Sokota 45, Miguel 90)
Estrela Amadora 1 (Davide 85)

Uniao Leiria 1 (Alhandra 49)
Sporting Lisbon 0

Sunday, April 25

Academica 3 (Paulo Sergio 36, Tonel 88, Marcelo 90)
Pacos Ferreira 2 (Renato Queiros 68, Ricardinho 72)

Belenenses 3 (Leonardo 29, Hugo Henrique 32, Marco Paulo 76)
Rio Ave 0

Moreirense 3 (Manoel 3, Vitor Pereira 85, Tito 90)
Maritimo 0

Nacional 3 (Rossato 25, 52, 90)
Beira Mar 0

FC Porto 1 (Bosingwa 50)
Alverca 0

Monday, April 26

Guimaraes 1 (Rogerio Matias 70)
Sporting Braga 0

Friday, April 30

Rio Ave 1 (Miguelito 14)
FC Porto 0

Sunday, May 2

Alverca 2 (Rodolfo Lima 74, Bruno Aguiar 90)
Nacional 1 (Adriano 38)

Beira Mar 1 (Juninho Petrolina 12)
Moreirense 0

Estrela Amadora 0
Guimaraes 1 (Flavio Meireles 47)

Maritimo 2 (Rincon 5, Chainho 31)
Gil Vicente 0

Pacos Ferreira 1 (Geraldo 48)
Belenenses 1 (Antchouet 24)

Sporting Braga 2 (Pena 24, Wender 85)
Academica 1 (Fredy 60)

Sporting Lisbon 0
Benfica 1 (Geovanni 87)

Uniao Leiria 2 (Tiago 45, Hugo Almeida 79)
Boavista 0

Sunday, May 9

Academica 4 (Paulo Sergio 3, Marcelo 9, Paulo Adriano pen 34, 55)
Estrela Amadora 1 (Julio Cesar 85)

Belenenses 0
Sporting Braga 2 (Igor 44, Soderstrom 50)

Benfica 0
Uniao Leiria 0

Boavista 2 (Ricardo Sousa 15, Cafu 47)
Maritimo 1 (Alan 54)

Gil Vicente 3 (Ferreira II 7, 19, Duah 39)
Beira Mar 0

Guimaraes 0
Sporting Lisbon 2 (Niculae 73, Joao Pinto 82)

Moreirense 3 (Tito pen 55, Manoel 57, Armando 59)
Alverca 1 (Vargas 84)

Nacional 4 (Rossato 50, 90, Adriano 75, Diego 85)
Rio Ave 0

FC Porto 3 (McCarthy 18, 51, 69)
Pacos Ferreira 1 (Renato Queiros 14)

PORTUGAL – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	34	25	7	2	63	19	82
Benfica	34	22	8	4	62	28	74
Sporting Lisbon	34	23	4	7	60	33	73
Nacional	34	17	5	12	56	35	56
Sporting Braga	34	15	9	10	36	38	54
Maritimo	34	12	12	10	35	33	48
Rio Ave	34	12	12	10	42	37	48
Boavista	34	12	11	11	32	31	47
Moreirense	34	12	10	12	33	33	46
Uniao Leiria	34	11	12	11	43	45	45
Beira Mar	34	11	8	15	36	45	41
Gil Vicente	34	10	10	14	43	40	40
Academica	34	11	5	18	40	42	38
Guimaraes	34	9	10	15	31	40	37
Belenenses	34	8	11	15	35	54	35
Alverca	34	10	5	19	33	49	35
Pacos Ferreira	34	8	4	22	27	53	28
Estrela Amadora	34	4	5	25	22	74	17

TOP GOALSCORERS
20 Benni McCarthy (FC Porto)
19 Adriano (Nacional)
15 Evandro (Rio Ave)
15 Liedson (Sporting Lisbon)

ROMANIA

Apr 2: Arges 0 Apulum 0.
Apr 3: Ceahlaul 3 Gloria 1; Otelul 0 Rapid 1; National 2 Dinamo 0; U Craiova 1 Farul 0.
Apr 4: Bacau 0 Brasov 0; Oradea 2 Poli AEK 3; Steaua 2 Petrolul 1.
Apr 9: Poli AEK 1 Steaua 8; Apulum 1 Oradea 0; Petrolul 1 National 1.
Apr 10: Dinamo 2 Otelul 0; Brasov 2 U Craiova 3; Ceahlaul 4 Arges 1; Rapid 1 Bacau 1; Gloria 1 Farul 1.
Apr 14: Arges 1 Gloria 1; Farul 1 Brasov 1; U Craiova 3 Rapid 1; Otelul 0 Petrolul 0; Oradea 2 Ceahlaul 1; National 0 Poli AEK 0; Steaua 4 Apulum 1; Bacau 0 Dinamo 0.
Apr 17: Apulum 1 National 0; Gloria 1 Brasov 3; Arges 2 Oradea 0; Rapid 2 Farul 3; Dinamo 2 U Craiova 1; Poli AEK 0 Otelul 0.
Apr 18: Petrolul 3 Bacau 1; Ceahlaul 1 Steaua 1.
Apr 23: U Craiova 5 Petrolul 1.
Apr 24: Brasov 2 Rapid 0; National 1 Ceahlaul 0; Farul 1 Dinamo 2; Steaua 4 Arges 0.
Apr 25: Otelul 3 Apulum 0; Bacau 0 Poli AEK 1; Oradea 1 Gloria 3.
Apr 30: Petrolul 2 Farul 2; Poli AEK 1 U Craiova 1.
May 1: Apulum 2 Bacau 0; Ceahlaul 1 Otelul 1; Arges 4 National 1; Rapid 3 Gloria 0; Dinamo 1 Brasov 0.
May 2: Oradea 0 Steaua 3.
May 7: Farul 1 Poli AEK 0; U Craiova 0 Apulum 0.
May 8: National 2 Oradea 3; Bacau 0 Ceahlaul 0.
May 9: Brasov 4 Petrolul 1; Otelul 1 Arges 1; Gloria 0 Steaua 2; Rapid 2 Dinamo 3.
May 12: Arges 1 Bacau 0; Dinamo 3 Gloria 0; Apulum 0 Farul 0; Ceahlaul 2 U Craiova 2; Oradea 1 Otelul 1; Petrolul 0 Rapid 2; Poli AEK 1 Brasov 0; Steaua 2 National 0.

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	26	19	3	4	59	28	60
Steaua	26	17	7	2	54	15	58
Rapid	26	12	7	7	42	32	43
U Craiova	26	10	9	7	36	30	39
Poli AEK	26	9	11	6	27	33	38
Apulum	26	10	8	8	27	34	38
National	26	10	6	10	29	32	36
Otelul	26	8	11	7	23	21	35
Farul	26	8	8	10	33	36	32
Arges	26	7	8	11	28	32	29
Brasov	26	8	5	13	32	38	29
Ceahlaul	26	7	7	12	33	45	28
Gloria	26	7	7	12	28	43	28
Petrolul	26	5	9	12	31	39	24
Bacau	26	5	9	12	24	39	24
Oradea	26	6	5	15	34	43	23

RUSSIA

Apr 3: Rubin 0 Lokomotiv 0; Amkar 2 Rostov 0; Shinnik 1 Alaniya 1; CSKA 3 Zenit 3; Saturn 0 Dinamo 0; Rotor 2 Spartak 3; Torpedo Moscow 3 Kuban 1; Torpedo-Metallurg 5 Kryliya Sovetov 1.
Apr 7: Rostov 1 CSKA 3; Kuban 1 Rotor 1; Alaniya 0 Saturn 3; Lokomotiv 0 Torpedo-Metallurg 1; Zenit 4 Rubin 3; Kryliya Sovetov 1 Amkar 0; Dinamo 1 Torpedo Moscow 1; Spartak 1 Shinnik 0.
Apr 10: Saturn 1 Lokomotiv 2; Rubin 1 Kryliya Sovetov 3; CSKA 3 Kuban 1; Torpedo-Metallurg 2 Rostov 2.
Apr 11: Amkar 0 Zenit 2; Torpedo Moscow 2 Spartak 1; Shinnik 1 Dinamo 0; Rotor 0 Alaniya 1.
Apr 17: Rostov 4 Rotor 1; Dinamo 0 Rubin 0; Kuban 0 Saturn 0; Lokomotiv 1 CSKA 0.
Apr 18: Spartak 6 Amkar 0; Kryliya Sovetov 2 Torpedo Moscow 5; Zenit 1 Shinnik 0; Alaniya 1 Torpedo-Metallurg 0.
Apr 24: Rubin 2 Spartak 0; Torpedo-Metallurg 2 Kuban 2; CSKA 1 Alaniya 0; Rotor 2 Lokomotiv 2.
Apr 25: Amkar 0 Dinamo 1; Torpedo Moscow 3 Zenit 1; Shinnik 0 Kryliya Sovetov 1; Saturn 2 Rostov 0.
May 1: Amkar 1 Shinnik 1; Rotor 1 CSKA 3; Kuban 2 Alaniya 3; Rostov 1 Lokomotiv 2; Spartak 0 Zenit 3.
May 2: Dinamo 1 Kryliya Sovetov 1; Saturn 1 Torpedo-Metallurg 1; Torpedo Moscow 1 Rubin 0.
May 8: Lokomotiv 3 Kuban 0; Shinnik 1 Rubin 1; Alaniya 0 Rostov 0; Torpedo-Metallurg 1 Rotor 0; Zenit 2 Dinamo 0; Amkar 2 Torpedo Moscow 1.
May 9: CSKA 2 Saturn 0; Kryliya Sovetov 4 Spartak 2.

RUSSIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Torpedo Moscow	10	6	3	1	21	9	21
Zenit	10	6	3	1	22	14	21
CSKA	10	5	4	1	17	9	19
Lokomotiv	10	5	4	1	14	6	19
Kryliya Sovetov	10	4	3	3	17	19	15
Spartak	10	4	2	4	20	19	14
Torpedo-Metallurg	10	3	5	2	15	11	14
Alaniya	10	3	4	3	6	8	13
Amkar	10	3	3	4	6	12	12
Dinamo	10	2	6	2	11	8	12
Saturn	10	2	6	2	12	10	12
Shinnik	10	2	4	4	5	9	10
Rubin	10	1	5	4	8	11	8
Rostov	10	1	4	5	9	17	7
Kuban	10	1	4	5	8	16	7
Rotor	10	1	2	7	12	25	5

SCOTLAND

Saturday, April 3

Aberdeen 3 (Hinds 21, McGuire 24, Sheerin 43)
Dundee Utd 0 Att: 8,449

Celtic 2 (Sutton 88, Agathe 90)
Hearts 2 (McKenna 21, De Vries 78) Att: 59,348

Dundee 2 (Milne 2, Novo 90)
Partick 1 (Thomson 14) Att: 5,084

Dunfermline 2 (Nicholson 40, Crawford 70)
Kilmarnock 1 (Invincible 9) Att: 3,914

Hibernian 3 (McManus 39, Riordan 54, 83)
Livingston 1 (Lilley 50) Att: 6,507

Sunday, April 4

Motherwell 0
Rangers 1 (Hughes 44) Att: 8,967

Wednesday, April 7

Livingston 1 (Fernandez 83)
Kilmarnock 1 (Dargo 85) Att: 2,677

Motherwell 1 (Clarkson 61)
Hearts 1 (Wyness 28) Att: 5,500

Saturday, April 10

Hibernian 3 (Caldwell 22, Thomson 45, Riordan pen 64)
Kilmarnock 0 Att: 7,326

Partick 1 (Thomson 49)
Hearts 0 Att: 4,043

Sunday, April 11

Dundee Utd 2 (Dodds 56, pen 85)
Dundee 2 (Lovell 18, Milne 39) Att: 9,571

Tuesday, April 13

Dunfermline 1 (Dempsey 78)
Hibernian 1 (Riordan 5) Att: 5,041

Wednesday, April 14

Livingston 1 (McMenamin 79)
Rangers 1 (Mols 25) Att: 6,096

Thursday, April 15

Motherwell 1 (Adams pen 10)
Dunfermline 0 Att: 3,920

Saturday, April 17

Dundee 2 (Lovell 38, Milne 90)
Hibernian 2 (Riordan 45, pen 50) Att: 5,508

Dunfermline 1 (Shields 45)
Dundee Utd 1 (McCracken 64) Att: 4,409

Hearts 1 (McKenna 18)
Livingston 1 (McMenamin 73) Att: 10,352

Rangers 2 (Thompson 40, Rae 49)
Partick 0 Att: 49,279

Sunday, April 18

Aberdeen 0
Motherwell 2 (Burns 14, Craig 90) Att: 7,246

Kilmarnock 0
Celtic 1 (Petrov 32) Att: 14,576

Wednesday, April 21

Celtic 1 (Larsson 16)
Aberdeen 2 (Prunty 56, Zdrilic 90) Att: 51,000

Saturday, April 24

Dundee Utd 3 (Dodds 1, Scotland 59, 90)
Rangers 3 (Thompson 6, pen 14, Namouchi 44)
Att: 8,339

Dunfermline 3 (Nicholson 36, Dempsey 52, Derek Young 74)
Motherwell 0 Att: 4,290

Kilmarnock 2 (Boyd 28, 85)
Hibernian 0 Att: 4,886

Livingston 2 (McNamee 24, McMenamin 63)
Aberdeen 0 Att: 3,133

Partick 0
Dundee 1 (Lovell 71) Att: 2,727

Sunday, April 25

Hearts 1 (De Vries 74)
Celtic 1 (McGeady 17) Att: 12,112

Saturday, May 1

Dundee Utd 0
Hearts 2 (De Vries 4, Webster 72) Att: 6,620

Hibernian 1 (Riordan 42)
Dundee 0 Att: 6,180

Kilmarnock 4 (Nish 54, 79, Canning 74, McSwegan 87)
Livingston 2 (Makel 13, O'Brien 23) Att: 5,023

Partick 2 (Grady 10, Mitchell 80)
Aberdeen 0 Att: 2,839

Rangers 4 (Arteta 45, Ross 47, Namouchi 51, Thompson 55)
Motherwell 0 Att: 47,579

Sunday, May 2

Celtic 1 (Larsson 47)
Dunfermline 2 (Nicholson 28, Dempsey 59) Att: 59,739

Wednesday, May 5

Hibernian 1 (Murdock 33)
Partick 2 (Grady 38, Murdock og 60) Att: 5,447

Saturday, May 8

Aberdeen 0
Hibernian 1 (O'Connor 90) Att: 6,781

Celtic 1 (Sutton 90)
Rangers 0 Att: 58,851

Dundee 2 (Milne 6, Novo 80)
Kilmarnock 0 Att: 4,942

Hearts 2 (De Vries 42, 81)
Dunfermline 1 (Tod 11) Att: 10,846

Motherwell 0
Dundee Utd 1 (Wilson 52) Att: 5,722

Sunday, May 9

Livingston 2 (O'Brien 22, McMenamin 68)
Partick 2 (Madaschi 5, Grady 63) Att: 3,160

Tuesday, May 11

Dundee Utd 3 (Miller 8, Innes 23, Scotland 30)
Dunfermline 2 (Bullen 34, Crawford 46) Att: 5,998

Wednesday, May 12

Dundee 2 (Novo 5, pen 90)
Livingston 0 Att: 4,954

Kilmarnock 4 (Skora 24, Boyd 36, 58, Nish 61)
Aberdeen 0 Att: 4,987

Motherwell 1 (Clarkson 64)
Celtic 1 (Beattie 79) Att: 7,749

Rangers 0
Hearts 1 (Hamill 50) Att: 47,467

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	37	30	5	2	103	24	95
Rangers	37	24	6	7	73	31	78
Hearts	37	18	11	8	53	38	65
Dunfermline	37	14	11	12	43	49	53
Dundee Utd	37	13	10	14	46	58	49
Motherwell	37	12	10	15	40	46	46
Hibernian	37	11	11	15	40	56	44
Dundee	37	11	10	16	46	56	43
Kilmarnock	37	12	5	20	49	72	41
Livingston	37	9	13	15	44	56	40
Aberdeen	37	9	7	21	38	61	34
Partick	37	6	7	24	37	65	25

LEADING GOALSCORER
28 Henrik Larsson (Celtic)

SCOTTISH CUP – semi-finals

Apr 10: Inverness CT 1 Dunfermline 1.
Apr 11: Livingston 1 Celtic 3.

Semi-final replay
Apr 20: Dunfermline 3 Inverness CT 2.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Apr 2: Obilic 2 Napredak 1.
Apr 3: Kom Podgorica 1 Sutjeska 2; OFK 0 Vojvodina 1; Partizan 1 Sartid 0; Borac 1 Hajduk K 0; Zeleznik 2 Zeta 0; Buducnost 0 Red Star 2; Zemun 0 Radnicki O 0.
Apr 7: Zemun 1 Kom Podgorica 0; Radnicki O 1 Buducnost 0; Red Star 0 Zeleznik 0; Zeta 1 Borac 2; Hajduk K 0 Obilic 3; Napredak 0 Partizan 1; Sartid 1 OFK 1; Vojvodina 2 Sutjeska 1.
Apr 10: Kom Podgorica 2 Vojvodina 4; Sutjeska 2 Sartid 1; OFK 2 Napredak 1; Partizan 1 Hajduk K 0; Obilic 2 Zeta 0; Borac 1 Red Star 1; Zeleznik 4 Radnicki O 0; Buducnost 1 Zemun 2.
Apr 13: Red Star 2 Obilic 0.
Apr 14: Buducnost 2 Kom Podgorica 1; Zemun 0 Zeleznik 1; Radnicki O 0 Borac 0; Zeta 1 Partizan 2; Hajduk K 1 OFK 1; Napredak 2 Sutjeska 1; Sartid 1 Vojvodina 0.
Apr 17: Kom Podgorica 1 Sartid 0; Vojvodina 1 Napredak 0; OFK 1 Zeta 0; Partizan 0 Red Star 0; Obilic 3 Radnicki O 0; Borac 0 Zemun 0; Zeleznik 5 Buducnost 1.
Apr 18: Sutjeska 1 Hajduk K 1.
Apr 24: Zeleznik 3 Kom Podgorica 0; Radnicki O 0 Partizan 3; Zeta 2 Sutjeska 1; Hajduk K 0 Vojvodina 1; Napredak 0 Sartid 1.
Apr 25: Buducnost 0 Borac 0; Zemun 3 Obilic 2; Red Star 2 OFK 1.
May 1: Sartid 1 Hajduk K 0; Vojvodina 0 Zeta 0; Sutjeska 0 Red Star 1; OFK 1 Radnicki O 0; Obilic 3 Buducnost 0; Borac 2 Zeleznik 2.
May 2: Partizan 0 Zemun 0; Kom Podgorica 1 Napredak 2.
May 8: Borac 4 Kom Podgorica 0; Zeleznik 0 Obilic 0; Buducnost 1 Partizan 0; Zemun 2 OFK 3; Radnicki O 0 Sutjeska 3; Red Star 3 Vojvodina 0; Zeta 4 Sartid 0; Hajduk K 0 Napredak 1.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Red Star	29	22	5	2	54	10	71
Partizan	29	19	6	4	48	18	63
Zeleznik	29	16	7	6	46	20	55
Sartid	29	14	7	8	40	31	49
OFK	29	13	9	7	34	30	48
Obilic	29	14	4	11	42	28	46
Sutjeska	29	12	4	13	38	35	40
Zemun	29	10	8	11	26	29	38
Vojvodina	29	9	10	10	28	33	37
Zeta	29	10	6	13	36	37	36
Hajduk K	29	10	5	14	25	28	35
Buducnost	29	10	4	15	29	47	34
Borac	29	7	11	11	29	41	32
Radnicki O	29	4	12	13	18	42	24
Napredak	29	6	4	19	24	44	22
Kom Podgorica	29	4	2	23	20	64	14

SPAIN

Saturday, April 3

Albacete 1 (Parri 81)
Real Madrid 2 (Roberto Carlos 18, Figo 71) Att: 17,000

Barcelona 0
Villarreal 0 Att: 50,000

Sevilla 1 (Antonio 51)
Espanyol 0 Att: 30,000

Sunday, April 4

Athletic Bilbao 0
Celta Vigo 0 Att: 32,000

Atletico Madrid 2 (Fernando Torres 24, Paunovic 45)
Valladolid 1 (Richetti 65) Att: 45,000

Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Luque 14, Victor 17)
Betis 2 (Marcos Assuncao 32, Dani 72) Att: 25,000

Mallorca 1 (Jesus Perera 58)
Real Sociedad 1 (Gabilondo 33) Att: 22,000

Osasuna 1 (Morales 22)
Malaga 1 (Insua 88) Att: 14,843

Valencia 2 (Pellegrino 73, Mista 83)
Murcia 0 Att: 40,000

Zaragoza 2 (Dani 39, Villa 49)
Racing Santander 2 (Pablo Casar 52, Moran 80) Att: 32,000

Saturday, April 10

Celta Vigo 0
Sevilla 0 Att: 19,000

Malaga 3 (Leko 31, Diego Alonso 45, 50)
Atletico Madrid 1 (Nano 45) Att: 22,000

Valladolid 1 (Oscar 65)
Barcelona 3 (Saviola 2, Ronaldinho 31, Iniesta 85) Att: 17,000

Sunday, April 11

Betis 0
Mallorca 2 (Eto'o 14, Jesus Perera 50) Att: 25,000

Espanyol 1 (Maxi Rodriguez 70)
Albacete 1 (Redondo 20) Att: 23,100

Racing Santander 1 (Javi Guerrero 75)
Athletic Bilbao 2 (Iraola 40, Yeste 90) Att: 14,790

Real Madrid 0
Osasuna 3 (Valdo 2, Pablo Garcia 44, Moha 61) Att: 60,000

Real Sociedad 2 (Nihat 63, 87)
Murcia 0 Att: 22,723

Villarreal 0
Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Pandiani 37, Diego Tristan 90) Att: 14,000

Zaragoza 0
Valencia 1 (Angulo 67) Att: 35,000

Wednesday, April 14

Betis 1 (Alfonso pen 34)
Barcelona 1 (Saviola 5) Att: 40,000

Saturday, April 17

Athletic Bilbao 4 (Etxeberria 33, Del Horno 57, Yeste 77, 90)
Zaragoza 0 Att: 32,000

Atletico Madrid 1 (Paunovic pen 48)
Real Madrid 2 (Solari 5, Ivan Helguera 79) Att: 58,000

Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Djalminha pen 55)
Valladolid 1 (Oscar 44) Att: 25,000

Sunday, April 18

Albacete 0
Celta Vigo 2 (Juanfran 21, Gustavo Lopez 46) Att: 16,000

Barcelona 3 (Saviola 19, Luis Garcia 24, Cocu 35)
Malaga 0 Att: 48,813

Mallorca 1 (Eto'o pen 45)
Villarreal 2 (Quique Alvarez 38, Pedro Marti 77) Att: 20,000

Murcia 0
Betis 1 (Marcos Assuncao 4) Att: 7,000

Osasuna 1 (Pablo Garcia 46)
Espanyol 3 (Tamudo 43, Alex Fernandez 63, Maxi Rodriguez 72) Att: 14,911

Sevilla 5 (Julio Baptista 4, 7, 48, pen 60, Magallanes 90)
Racing Santander 2 (Javi Guerrero pen 71, Matabuena 85) Att: 30,000

Valencia 2 (Vicente 72, Mista 90)
Real Sociedad 2 (Xabi Alonso 64, Karpin 69) Att: 45,000

Saturday, April 24

Espanyol 3 (Fredson 65, Raducanu 83, 89)
Atletico Madrid 1 (Fernando Torres 90) Att: 34,200

Malaga 1 (Canabal 41)
Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Victor 21) Att: 22,000

Sunday, April 25

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Del Horno 31)
Valencia 1 (Jorge Lopez pen 13) Att: 40,000

Betis 2 (Benjamin 15, Dani 20)
Real Sociedad 1 (Nihat 46) Att: 25,000

Celta Vigo 1 (Inaki Munoz og 48)
Osasuna 0 Att: 21,000

Racing Santander 0
Albacete 2 (Pacheco 42, Redondo 53) Att: 13,090

Real Madrid 1 (Solari 54)
Barcelona 2 (Kluivert 58, Xavi 86) Att: 80,000

Valladolid 1 (Chema 59)
Mallorca 3 (Delibasic 16, Correa 70, 85) Att: 21,000

Villarreal 1 (Quique Alvarez 68)
Murcia 0 Att: 17,000

Zaragoza 4 (Villa 25, 42, 53, 57)
Sevilla 4 (Javi Casquero 4, 46, Julio Baptista pen 67, Carlos 90) Att: 28,000

Saturday, May 1

Atletico Madrid 3 (Nano 2, Fernando Torres 5, Garcia Calvo 38)
Celta Vigo 2 (Milosevic 31, Edu 69) Att: 40,000

Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Diego Tristan 29, Capdevila 69)
Real Madrid 0 Att: 36,000

Sunday, May 2

Albacete 3 (Aranda 2, Pacheco 54, Mikel 78)
Zaragoza 1 (Rebosio 74) Att: 15,000

Barcelona 4 (Ronaldinho 35, Saviola 44, 58, Van Bronckhorst 55)
Espanyol 1 (Tamudo pen 19) Att: 76,810

Mallorca 2 (Eto'o 24, 67)
Malaga 1 (Salva 59) Att: 18,000

Murcia 2 (Acciari 33, Luis Garcia 89)
Valladolid 1 (Jonathan 31) Att: 7,000

Osasuna 1 (Punal pen 56)
Racing Santander 2 (Cristian Alvarez 64, Afek 90) Att: 15,503

Real Sociedad 2 (Schurrer 40, Gabilondo 59)
Villarreal 2 (Jose Mari 10, 46) Att: 26,485

Sevilla 2 (Julio Baptista 39, pen 63)
Athletic Bilbao 0 Att: 25,000

Valencia 2 (Curro Torres 38, Baraja 48)
Betis 0 Att: 51,000

Saturday, May 8

Celta Vigo 1 (Edu 42)
Barcelona 0 Att: 27,000

Real Madrid 2 (Pavon 17, Figo pen 51)
Mallorca 3 (Eto'o 11, 36, Campano 42) Att: 65,000

Sunday, May 9

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Iraola pen 88)
Albacete 1 (Pacheco pen 54) Att: 33,000

Espanyol 2 (Pochettino 8, De la Pena 74)
Deportivo La Coruna 0 Att: 40,300

Malaga 1 (Miguel Angel 66)
Murcia 0 Att: 17,000

Racing Santander 2 (Cristian Alvarez 56, Afek 90)
Atletico Madrid 2 (Ibagaza 26, De los Santos 58) Att: 14,753

Sevilla 0
Valencia 2 (Vicente 12, Baraja 89) Att: 45,000

Valladolid 2 (Fernando Sales 22, 72)
Real Sociedad 2 (Gabilondo 19, Nihat 42) Att: 17,000

Villarreal 1 (Jose Mari 67)
Betis 0 Att: 16,000

Zaragoza 1 (Alvaro 90)
Osasuna 0 Att: 29,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Valencia	36	23	8	5	70	24	77
Real Madrid	36	21	7	8	70	48	70
Barcelona	36	20	9	7	61	37	69
Dep La Coruna	36	19	8	9	56	34	65
Athletic Bilbao	36	14	11	11	48	44	53
Atletico Madrid	36	14	10	12	46	48	52
Villarreal	36	14	9	13	45	45	51
Malaga	36	15	5	16	47	51	50
Sevilla	36	13	10	13	51	44	49
Osasuna	36	11	15	10	37	34	48
Betis	36	11	13	12	42	41	46
Mallorca	36	13	6	17	48	63	45
Albacete	36	12	8	16	38	44	44
Real Sociedad	36	10	12	14	44	51	42
Zaragoza	36	11	9	16	42	53	42
Racing Santander*	36	11	10	15	48	61	42
Espanyol	36	12	4	20	44	60	40
Celta Vigo	36	9	12	15	47	63	39
Valladolid	36	9	11	16	43	55	38
Murcia	36	4	11	21	27	54	23

**1pt deducted for playing too many non-EU players in home game v Osasuna*

LEADING GOALSCORERS
24 Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
19 Mista (Valencia)
18 Julio Baptista (Sevilla)
18 Salva (Malaga)

SWEDEN

Apr 3: Landskrona 1 Helsingborgs 1.
Apr 4: Kalmar 0 IFK Gothenburg 0; AIK 1 Sundsvall 0.
Apr 5: Elfsborg 1 Orgryte 2; Trelleborgs 2 Djurgardens 2; Orebro 2 Halmstads 5.
Apr 6: Hammarby 0 Malmo 0.
Apr 9: Malmo 5 Orebro 1; Halmstads 1 Trelleborgs 0; IFK Gothenburg 3 Elfsborg 0.
Apr 12: Sundsvall 0 Landskrona 0; Helsingborgs 1 Kalmar 2; Orgryte 0 Hammarby 0.
Apr 13: Djurgardens 3 AIK 1.
Apr 18: Landskrona 0 Orebro 1; AIK 0 Trelleborgs 0; Sundsvall 1 Orgryte 1.
Apr 19: Helsingborgs 1 Djurgardens 1; Elfsborg 1 Malmo 5; IFK Gothenburg 0 Halmstads 0.
Apr 20: Kalmar 1 Hammarby 2.
Apr 22: Orgryte 1 AIK 1.
Apr 24: Orebro 1 Kalmar 2; Hammarby 1 Elfsborg 0; Malmo 1 IFK Gothenburg 0.
Apr 25: Trelleborgs 2 Landskrona 1; Halmstads 3 Helsingborgs 2; Djurgardens 3 Sundsvall 1.
May 2: Kalmar 2 Sundsvall 1; Landskrona 2 Djurgardens 0; Orebro 1 Hammarby 2.
May 3: Elfsborg 1 Helsingborgs 1; AIK 0 Halmstads 2; Trelleborgs 1 Malmo 1.
May 4: Orgryte 1 IFK Gothenburg 2.
May 6: Malmo 0 AIK 0.
May 9: Halmstads 5 Landskrona 3; Djurgardens 0 Kalmar 3; Sundsvall 0 Elfsborg 0.
May 10: Hammarby 0 Trelleborgs 1; Helsingborgs 1 IFK Gothenburg 2; Orgryte 2 Orebro 2.
May 12: Elfsborg 0 Djurgardens 0; Kalmar 1 Halmstads 3; Landskrona 2 Malmo 1.
May 13: AIK 0 Hammarby 1; Trelleborgs 1 Orebro 2; Helsingborgs 3 Orgryte 0; IFK Gothenburg 0 Sundsvall 1.

SWEDEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Halmstads	7	6	1	0	19	8	19
Hammarby	7	4	2	1	6	3	14
Kalmar	7	4	1	2	11	8	13
Malmo	7	3	3	1	13	5	12
IFK Gothenburg	7	3	2	2	7	4	11
Trelleborgs	7	2	3	2	7	7	9
Djurgardens	7	2	3	2	9	10	9
Landskrona	7	2	2	3	9	10	8
Orgryte	7	1	4	2	7	10	7
Orebro	7	2	1	4	10	17	7
Helsingborgs	7	1	3	3	10	10	6
Sundsvall	7	1	3	3	4	7	6
AIK	7	1	3	3	3	7	6
Elfsborg	7	0	3	4	3	12	3

SWITZERLAND

Apr 4: Servette 1 Basle 4; Grasshopper 4 Young Boys 2; Neuchatel Xamax 4 Aarau 1; St Gallen 4 Wil 1900 0; Thun 2 Zurich 1.
Apr 7: Young Boys 1 Grasshopper 0.
Apr 8: Aarau 2 Neuchatel Xamax 0; Basle 1 Servette 0; Wil 1900 0 St Gallen 2; Zurich 0 Thun 0.
Apr 15: Basle 2 Wil 1900 0; Grasshopper 1 Servette 5; Neuchatel Xamax 4 Zurich 2; Thun 3 Young Boys 0; St Gallen 2 Aarau 0.
Apr 18: Aarau 3 Basle 0; Servette 0 Young Boys 2; Thun 2 Neuchatel Xamax 3; Wil 1900 1 Grasshopper 5; Zurich 2 St Gallen 2.
Apr 24: Grasshopper 4 Aarau 1; Neuchatel Xamax 6 Servette 1; St Gallen 2 Thun 1; Young Boys 5 Wil 1900 1.
Apr 25: Basle 1 Zurich 1.
May 1: Aarau 0 Young Boys 1; Neuchatel Xamax 0 St Gallen 1; Wil 1900 0 Servette 2.
May 2: Thun 0 Basle 2; Zurich 0 Grasshopper 0.
May 8: Basle 0 St Gallen 0; Grasshopper 2 Thun 3; Servette 1 Aarau 1; Wil 1900 0 Zurich 1.
May 9: Young Boys 3 Neuchatel Xamax 1.
May 12: Aarau 4 Wil 1900 0; Neuchatel Xamax 3 Basle 1; St Gallen 2 Grasshopper 1; Thun 2 Servette 1; Zurich 2 Young Boys 2.

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	34	24	7	3	82	31	79
Young Boys	34	21	6	7	72	45	69
Servette	34	15	7	12	59	57	52
St Gallen	34	13	8	13	51	55	47
Zurich	34	12	8	14	51	49	44
Thun	34	11	10	13	47	56	43
Grasshopper	34	12	5	17	61	70	41
Aarau	34	9	11	14	55	63	38
Neuchatel X	34	9	6	19	44	59	33
Wil 1900	34	6	8	20	34	71	26

TURKEY

Apr 3: Diyarbakirspor 0 Denizlispor 1; Gaziantepspor 2 Ankaragucu 1; Trabzonspor 2 Istanbulspor 0; Fenerbahce 4 Sebatspor 2.
Apr 4: Galatasaray 1 Besiktas 2; Adanaspor 0 Bursaspor 3; Elazigspor 0 Malatyaspor 0; Konyaspor 2 Rizespor 1; Genclerbirligi 2 Samsunspor 1.
Apr 9: Rizespor 1 Fenerbahce 0.
Apr 10: Ankaragucu 1 Galatasaray 0; Istanbulspor 3 Elazigspor 1; Sebatspor 4 Adanaspor 3; Bursaspor 1 Trabzonspor 2.
Apr 11: Malatyaspor 5 Diyarbakirspor 0; Denizlispor 2 Gaziantepspor 0; Besiktas 2 Genclerbirligi 2.
Apr 16: Galatasaray 4 Denizlispor 3.
Apr 17: Genclerbirligi 1 Ankaragucu 2; Konyaspor 2 Besiktas 2; Gaziantepspor 1 Malatyaspor 3; Elazigspor 0 Trabzonspor 3.
Apr 18: Sebatspor 0 Bursaspor 1; Diyarbakirspor 1 Istanbulspor 2; Adanaspor 0 Rizespor 1; Fenerbahce 1 Samsunspor 1.
Apr 21: Samsunspor 2 Konyaspor 3.
Apr 23: Malatyaspor 1 Galatasaray 2.
Apr 24: Trabzonspor 2 Diyarbakirspor 0; Bursaspor 4 Elazigspor 0; Istanbulspor 0 Gaziantepspor 1; Rizespor 0 Sebatspor 1.
Apr 25: Samsunspor 2 Adanaspor 1; Besiktas 1 Fenerbahce 3; Denizlispor 1 Genclerbirligi 2; Ankaragucu 1 Konyaspor 0.
Apr 30: Adanaspor 1 Besiktas 0.
May 1: Genclerbirligi 2 Malatyaspor 2; Konyaspor 1 Denizlispor 1; Fenerbahce 3 Ankaragucu 1; Gaziantepspor 1 Trabzonspor 2.
May 2: Elazigspor 0 Diyarbakirspor 1; Galatasaray 2 Istanbulspor 2; Bursaspor 4 Rizespor 2; Sebatspor 1 Samsunspor 0.
May 8: Malatyaspor 1 Konyaspor 3; Elazigspor 1 Gaziantepspor 2; Ankaragucu 1 Adanaspor 2.
May 9: Diyarbakirspor 0 Bursaspor 3; Denizlispor 0 Fenerbahce 4; Trabzonspor 2 Galatasaray 4; Istanbulspor 3 Genclerbirligi 0; Samsunspor 2 Rizespor 1; Besiktas 0 Sebatspor 2.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fenerbahce	33	23	7	3	80	37	76
Trabzonspor	33	22	5	6	58	36	71
Besiktas	33	18	8	7	65	44	62
Denizlispor	33	17	4	12	51	39	55
Gaziantepspor	33	17	3	13	48	50	54
Galatasaray	33	14	9	10	53	46	51
Samsunspor	33	13	7	13	46	46	46
Ankaragucu	33	13	6	14	46	50	45
Konyaspor	33	10	14	9	53	52	44
Genclerbirligi	33	12	7	14	54	50	43
Diyarbakirspor	33	12	7	14	43	50	43
Malatyaspor	33	10	12	11	47	38	42
Sebatspor	33	10	9	14	42	51	39
Rizespor	33	12	3	18	36	53	39
Istanbulspor	33	10	8	15	44	45	38
Bursaspor	33	9	10	14	39	40	37
Elazigspor	33	5	7	21	36	76	22
Adanaspor	33	5	4	24	34	72	19

TURKISH CUP – Final

May 5 - Istanbul
Trabzonspor 4 (Mehmet 23, Gokdeniz 70, pen 77, Ahinful pen 89)
Genclerbirligi 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,000

UKRAINE

Apr 4: Kryvbas 1 Shakhtar 0; Arsenal 1 Dnipro 1; Chornomorets 2 Metalurh Z 1; Volyn 1 Borysfen 0; Tavriya 1 Karpaty 0; Vorskla 1 Zirka 1; Metalurh D 0 Obolon 0; Illichivets 0 Dynamo 1.
Apr 10: Shakhtar 2 Dynamo 4; Obolon 0 Illichivets 2; Zirka 0 Metalurh D 2; Karpaty 0 Vorskla 1; Borysfen 1 Tavriya 0; Metalurh Z 0 Volyn 0; Dnipro 1 Chornomorets 0; Kryvbas 1 Arsenal 1.
Apr 17: Arsenal 0 Shakhtar 0; Chornomorets 3 Kryvbas 0; Volyn 2 Dnipro 2; Tavriya 2 Metalurh Z 0; Vorskla 1 Borysfen 1; Metalurh D 0 Karpaty 0; Illichivets 1 Zirka 0; Dynamo 2 Obolon 0.
Apr 24: Karpaty 1 Illichivets 1; Borysfen 1 Metalurh D 1; Metalurh Z 1 Vorskla 1; Kryvbas 3 Volyn 0; Shakhtar 2 Obolon 0; Zirka 0 Dynamo 1; Dnipro 3 Tavriya 1; Arsenal 2 Chornomorets 1.
May 2: Volyn 2 Arsenal 1; Tavriya 2 Kryvbas 1; Vorskla 0 Dnipro 2; Metalurh D 4 Metalurh Z 2; Illichivets 0 Borysfen 0; Dynamo 1 Karpaty 0; Chornomorets 2 Shakhtar 0.
May 3: Obolon 3 Zirka 0.
May 8: Borysfen 2 Dynamo 0.
May 9: Shakhtar 3 Zirka 0; Karpaty 1 Obolon 0; Metalurh Z 0 Illichivets 0; Dnipro 0 Metalurh D 0; Kryvbas 3 Vorskla 1; Arsenal 1 Tavriya 0; Chornomorets 1 Volyn 1.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dynamo	24	18	4	2	48	16	58
Shakhtar	24	16	4	4	44	18	52
Dnipro	24	14	7	3	39	17	49
Metalurh D	24	10	9	5	38	26	39
Chornomorets	24	9	11	4	31	24	38
Arsenal	24	9	7	8	28	25	34
Obolon	24	9	6	9	22	25	33
Borysfen	24	7	7	10	16	23	28
Illichivets	24	6	10	8	23	31	28
Kryvbas	24	7	6	11	22	29	27
Volyn	24	7	6	11	21	32	27
Tavriya	24	5	8	11	15	23	23
Metalurh Z	24	5	8	11	18	29	23
Vorskla	24	5	8	11	18	34	23
Karpaty	24	5	7	12	18	26	22
Zirka*	24	2	8	14	11	34	11

**3pts deducted for non-payment of wages*

SOUTH AMERICA

LIBERTADORES CUP

Group 1

Apr 8 - Sao Caetano do Sul
Sao Caetano (Bra) 1 (Triguinho 57)
Penarol (Uru) 1 (Bueno 18)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Martin (Arg)

Apr 8 - Mexico City
America (Mex) 4 (Pardo 3, Castillo 23, Mendoza 37, Blanco pen 48)
The Strongest (Bol) 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Brand (Ven)

Apr 15 - La Paz
The Strongest 0
Sao Caetano 2 (Somalia 8, Warley 85)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Solorzano (Ven)
Sent off: Sartori (The Strongest) 77min

Apr 15 - Montevideo
Penarol 2 (Bueno 83, 90)
America 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Gimenez (Arg)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America	6	4	1	1	11	5	13
Sao Caetano	6	2	2	2	10	8	8
Penarol	6	2	2	2	9	7	8
The Strongest	6	1	1	4	4	14	4

Group 2

Apr 6 - Buenos Aires
Velez Sarsfield (Arg) 1 (Bianchi 70)
Fenix (Uru) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Amarilla (Par)

Apr 6 - Manizales
Once Caldas (Col) 2 (Soto 35, Valentierra 79)
Maracaibo (Ven) 1 (M Martinez 33)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Pozo (Chl)

Apr 22 - Maracaibo
Maracaibo 4 (Riep 12, 73, Casseres 48, 66)
Velez Sarsfield 2 (Pellegrino 83, Fuentes 85)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Chandia (Chl)
Sent off: De Souza (Velez) 42min

Apr 22 - Montevideo
Fenix 2 (Guerra 22, Carini 59)
Once Caldas 2 (Fabbro 68, 76)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ponce (Chl)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Once Caldas	6	4	1	1	11	6	13
Maracaibo	6	2	2	2	10	9	8
Velez Sarsfield	6	2	1	3	7	9	7
Fenix	6	1	2	3	6	10	5

Group 3

Apr 14 - Caracas
Caracas (Ven) 2 (Cominges 32, Pereira pen 75)
Cruzeiro (Bra) 3 (Marcio 21, Lima 22, 45)
HT: 1-3. **Ref:** Ortube (Bol)

Apr 14 - Concepcion
U de Concepcion (Chl) 2 (Paredes 6, 15)
Santos Laguna (Mex) 2 (Vuoso 3, Borgetti 55)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Vazquez (Uru)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruzeiro	6	4	1	1	15	6	13
Santos Laguna	6	3	3	0	10	6	12
Caracas	6	2	0	4	8	12	6
U de Concepcion	6	0	2	4	7	16	2

Group 4

Apr 7 - Sao Paulo
Sao Paulo (Bra) 3 (Marquinhos 36, Luis Fabiano 46, 68)
Alianza Lima (Per) 1 (Silva 23)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Baldassi (Arg)

Apr 7 - Quito
LDU Quito (Ecu) 5 (Murillo 8, 27, Reasco 29, Paredes 31, Espinola 90)
Cobreloa (Chl) 1 (Galaz 85)
HT: 4-0. **Ref:** Solorzano (Ven)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sao Paulo	6	5	0	1	11	7	15
LDU Quito	6	4	0	2	13	3	12
Alianza Lima	6	3	0	3	6	8	9
Cobreloa	6	0	0	6	3	15	0

Group 5

Apr 20 - Arequipa
Cienciano (Per) 3 (Portilla 13, Acasiete 22, Lugo pen 82)
Independiente (Arg) 2 (Castillo 15, Jimenez 75)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Solorzano (Ven)

Apr 20 - Montevideo
Nacional (Uru) 3 (Medina 34, pen 74, L Romero 53)
El Nacional (Ecu) 2 (Borja 35, Checa 77)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Selman (Chl)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional	6	3	3	0	7	4	12
Independiente	6	2	2	2	9	7	8
Cienciano	6	2	1	3	10	12	7
El Nacional	6	1	2	3	6	9	5

Group

Apr 14 - Buenos Aires
River Plate 2 (Sand 5, Cavenaghi 14)
Deportivo Tachira 2 (Vielma 69, Boada 89)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Almeida (Bra)

Apr 14 - Ibague
Tolima 3 (Passo 6, Charria 64, Zambrano 76)
Libertad 2 (Morinigo pen 27, 81)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Lecca (Per)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
River Plate	6	3	2	1	10	6	11
Dep Tachira	6	2	4	0	8	4	10
Tolima	6	1	2	3	6	9	5
Libertad	6	1	2	3	5	10	5

Group 7

Apr 14 - Santos
Santos (Bra) 5 (Diego pen 20, 73, Elano 40, Preto Casagrande 55, Robinho pen 87)
Jorge Wilstermann (Bol) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Larrionda (Uru)
Sent off: Morejon (Wilstermann) 68min

Apr 14 - Guayaquil
Barcelona (Ecu) 2 (Vera 41, 73)
Guarani (Par) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Elizondo (Arg)
Sent off: Cabrera (Guarani) 68min

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Santos	6	5	1	0	16	6	16
Barcelona	6	2	2	2	9	6	8
Guarani	6	1	3	2	6	7	6
J Wilstermann	6	0	2	4	5	17	2

Group 8

Apr 7 - La Paz
Bolivar (Bol) 1 (Castillo 21)
Deportivo Cali (Col) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Torres (Par)

Apr 8 - Santiago
Colo Colo (Chl) 1 (Henriquez 33)
Boca Juniors (Arg) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Rezende (Bra)

Apr 21 - Buenos Aires
Boca Juniors 3 (Schiavi 55, Villarreal 86, Donnet 90)
Bolivar 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Vazquez (Uru)

Apr 21 - Cali
Deportivo Cali 3 (C Castillo 45, Moreno 70, O Diaz 75)
Colo Colo 1 (Millape 84)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Souza (Bra)
Sent off: C Castillo (Deportivo Cali) 58min

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Boca Juniors	6	4	0	2	10	4	12
Dep Cali	6	3	0	3	9	9	9
Bolivar	6	3	0	3	7	9	9
Colo Colo	6	2	0	4	6	10	6

Group 9

Apr 6 - Asuncion
Olimpia (Par) 1 (Lopez 43)
Coritiba (Bra) 1 (Capixaba 34)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Mendez (Uru)

Apr 13 - Curitiba
Coritiba 2 (Aristizabal 68, Luis Mario 75)
Sporting Cristal (Per) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Chandia (Chl)
Sent off: Moisela (Sporting Cristal) 66min

Apr 13 - Rosario
Rosario Central (Arg) 2 (Gonzalez 2, Sanchez 78)
Olimpia 1 (Lopez 38)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Sent off: Esteche (Olimpia) 89min

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting Cristal	6	3	1	2	13	9	10
Rosario Central	6	3	1	2	8	8	10
Coritiba	6	2	2	2	7	8	8
Olimpia	6	1	2	3	7	10	5

Group winners and the five best runners-up qualified for second round; other four runners-up went into play-offs for last two second round berths

Play-offs

Apr 28 - Sao Caetano do Sul
Sao Caetano 2 (Anderson Lima 8, Marcinho pen 32)
Independiente 2 (Castillo 7, Franco 73)
Aet. **HT:** 2-1. **90mins:** 2-2. **Ref:** Torres (Par)
Sao Caetano 4-2 on pens
Sent off: Quinteros (Independiente) 83min

Apr 29 - Guayaquil
Barcelona 6 (Kaviedes pen 37, 41, 45, Teixeira 71, Vera pen 78, Escobar 89)
Maracaibo 1 (Riep 11)
HT: 3-1. **Ref:** Ortube (Bol)
Sent off: Dudamel (Maracaibo) 87min

2nd rnd, 1st legs

May 4 - San Cristobal
Deportivo Tachira 3 (Rondon 3, Panigutti 41, Beraza 66)
Nacional 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Hidalgo (Per)
Sent off: A Romero 49min, Morales 69min (both Nacional)

May 4 - Torreon
Santos Laguna 0
River Plate 1 (Tula 58)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Mendez (Uru)

May 4 - Lima
Sporting Cristal 2 (Bonnet 41, Quinteros 45)
Boca Juniors 3 (Tevez 31, Calvo 82, Barros Schelotto 90)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Selman (Chl)

May 5 - Cali
Deportivo Cali 1 (Tellez 37)
Cruzeiro 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Chandia (Chl)

May 5 - Quito
LDU Quito 4 (Ambrosi 18, 72, Urrutia 48, Salas 84)
Santos 2 (Robinho 2, Elano 4)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)

May 5 - Sao Caetano do Sul
Sao Caetano 2 (Anderson Lima 52, Oviedo og 83)
America 1 (O A Gonzalez 23)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Larrionda (Uru)
Sent off: Ortiz (America) 89min

May 6 - Guayaquil
Barcelona 0
Once Caldas 0
Ref: Solorzano (Ven)
Sent off: Tenorio (Barcelona) 62min; Viafara (Once Caldas) 76min

May 6 - Rosario
Rosario Central 1 (Belloso 86)
Sao Paulo 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Amarilla (Par)
Sent off: Fabio Simplicio (Sao Paulo) 34min

2nd rnd, 2nd legs

May 11 - Mexico City
America 1 (Navia 20)
Sao Caetano 1 (Triguinho 79)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Sent off: Blanco (America) 90min
Sao Caetano 3-2 on agg

May 11 - Buenos Aires
River Plate 1 (Salas 74)
Santos Laguna 2 (Altamirano 25, Vuoso 49)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Torres (Par)
Agg 2-2. River 5-3 on pens

May 11 - Santos
Santos 2 (Diego 2, 49)
LDU Quito 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Amarilla (Par)
Agg 4-4. Santos 5-3 on pens

May 12 - Buenos Aires
Boca Juniors 2 (Villarreal 40, Tevez 62)
Sporting Cristal 1 (Lima 66)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Simon (Bra)
Boca 5-3 on agg

May 12 - Sao Paulo
Sao Paulo 2 (Grafite 45, 76)
Rosario Central 1 (Herrera 6)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Larrionda (Uru)
Agg 2-2. Sao Paulo 5-4 on pens

May 13 - Belo Horizonte
Cruzeiro 2 (Alex pen 47, Guilherme 87)
Deportivo Cali 1 (Moreno 41)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Baldassi (Arg)
Sent off: Guilherme (Cruzeiro) 90min
Agg 2-2. Dep Cali 3-0 on pens

May 13 - Montevideo
Nacional 2 (L Romero 36, Valdez 45)
Deportivo Tachira 2 (Vielma 85, Chirinos 87)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Brazenas (Arg)
Dep Tachira 5-2 on agg

May 13 - Manizales
Once Caldas 1 (Agudelo 83)
Barcelona 1 (Gavica 50)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ortube (Bol)
Agg 1-1. Once Caldas 4-2 on pens

ARGENTINA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, April 2

Velez Sarsfield 2 (Bianchi 10, Gracian 74)
Atletico Rafaela 0

Saturday, April 3

Banfield 3 (Bilos 52, Palacio 54, Bustos Montoya 75)
Racing Club 1 (Gonzalez 49)

Colon Santa Fe 2 (Gonzalez 21, Blanco 63)
Independiente 0

Sunday, April 4

Arsenal 0
Quilmes 0

Boca Juniors 3 (Tevez 7, Barros Schelotto pen 28, Cagna 43)
Talleres Cordoba 1 (Osorio 4)

Chacarita Juniors 2 (Ojeda pen 37, Muller 68)
Lanus 3 (Andrizzi 34, Gioda 62, Diaz 71)

Gimnasia LP 2 (Goux 65, Scotti 70)
Estudiantes 2 (Cardozo 19, Carrusca pen 35)

Olimpo 1 (Mazzoni 16)
River Plate 3 (Sand 48, Ameli 87, Cavenaghi 90)

Rosario Central 1 (Campora 67)
Nueva Chicago 1 (Testa 12)

San Lorenzo 0
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Rosales 14)

Friday, April 9

Lanus 1 (Gioda 56)
Racing Club 2 (Fernandez 17, pen 70)

Saturday, April 10

Estudiantes 1 (Pavone 18)
Rosario Central 3 (Campora 2, Gonzalez 16, Talamonti 42)

Independiente 1 (Ayala 38)
San Lorenzo 1 (Astudillo 25)

Newell's Old Boys 5 (Marino 41, Patino 47, 65, Rosales 72, 77)
Gimnasia LP 2 (Licht 54, Goux 90)

Talleres Cordoba 2 (Osorio 15, Piriz Alvez 26)
Chacarita Juniors 2 (Pena pen 43, Graf 79)

Sunday, April 11

Atletico Rafaela 0
Boca Juniors 1 (Donnet 74)

Banfield 1 (Sanchez pen 90)
Arsenal 1 (Quinteros 45)

Nueva Chicago 0
Velez Sarsfield 3 (Fuentes 2, Zarate 74, Gracian 79)

Quilmes 0
Olimpo 1 (Delorte 88)

River Plate 4 (Ameli 19, Gonzalez 23, Cavenaghi 75, 83)
Colon Santa Fe 1 (Fuertes 80)

Friday, April 16

Gimnasia LP 1 (Choy 16)
Independiente 1 (Morales 44)

Saturday, April 17

Racing Club 3 (Mirosevic 17, Lopez 48, Gonzalez 77)
Talleres Cordoba 1 (De Bruno 85)

Velez Sarsfield 3 (Zarate 58, Pellegrino 64, 90)
Estudiantes 1 (Pavone 36)

Sunday, April 18

Boca Juniors 2 (Villarreal 9, Barijho 61)
Nueva Chicago 0

Chacarita Juniors 1 (Milla 57)
Atletico Rafaela 3 (Villa 40, 67, 90)

Colon Santa Fe 3 (Hernandez 21, 64, Fuertes 37)
Quilmes 3 (Garnier 1, Lopez 72, Brana 77)

Lanus 1 (Graziani 90)
Banfield 0

Olimpo 0
Arsenal 0

Rosario Central 0
Newell's Old Boys 0

San Lorenzo 1 (Carreno 69)
River Plate 2 (Gonzalez 62, Lopez 86)

Friday, April 23

Arsenal 1 (Bustamante 64)
Colon Santa Fe 0

Banfield 2 (Ortiz 20, Bustos Montoya 58)
Olimpo 0

Quilmes 1 (Carrario 27)
San Lorenzo 1 (Romagnoli pen 32)

Saturday, April 24

Atletico Rafaela 1 (Larrosa 29)
Racing Club 2 (Orozco 20, Lopez 51)

Independiente 3 (Zurita 51, Losada 70, Gaona og 87)
Rosario Central 2 (Olarra og 33, Ferrari pen 66)

Nueva Chicago 1 (Tilger 25)
Chacarita Juniors 1 (Casanova 57)

Talleres Cordoba 1 (Osorio pen 81)
Lanus 0

Sunday, April 25

Estudiantes 2 (Luguercio 7, 25)
Boca Juniors 2 (Cangele 20, Tevez 44)

Newell's Old Boys 2 (Rosales 3, Marino 39)
Velez Sarsfield 2 (Zarate 9, 43)

River Plate 1 (Lopez 87)
Gimnasia LP 1 (Castillo 84)

Thursday, April 29

Boca Juniors 1 (Barijho 5)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Vasquez pen 32)

Friday, April 30

Racing Club 1 (Orozco 10)
Nueva Chicago 1 (Tilger 45)

Rosario Central 1 (Belloso 85)
River Plate 2 (Montenegro 18, Cavenaghi 34)

Sunday, May 2

Chacarita Juniors 2 (Moreno 5, Rivero 20)
Estudiantes 0

Colon Santa Fe 2 (Carignano 41, 64)
Olimpo 0

Gimnasia LP 0
Quilmes 1 (Carrario 63)

Lanus 1 (Diaz pen 3)
Atletico Rafaela 1 (Villa 45)

San Lorenzo 0
Arsenal 0

Talleres Cordoba 2 (Piriz Alvez 2, Maidana 44)
Banfield 2 (Gonzalez 23, Bilos 85)

Velez Sarsfield 0
Independiente 0

Friday, May 7

Banfield 3 (Bilos 23, Bustos Montoya 32, Amato 77)
Colon Santa Fe 1 (Carignano 51)

Olimpo 2 (Laspada 39, Mas 70)
San Lorenzo 0

Saturday, May 8

Arsenal 1 (Casteglione 53)
Gimnasia LP 0

Estudiantes 1 (Aquino 34)
Racing Club 0

Sunday, May 9

Atletico Rafaela 1 (Gandin 76)
Talleres Cordoba 0

Independiente 1 (Caggiano 69)
Boca Juniors 4 (Caballero og 18, Barijho 31, 64, Cangele 42)

Newell's Old Boys 4 (Aguirre 14, Marino 63, Rosales 68, Morales 79)
Chacarita Juniors 1 (Casanova 43)

Nueva Chicago 0
Lanus 0

Quilmes 1 (Carrario 40)
Rosario Central 0

River Plate 1 (Husain 69)
Velez Sarsfield 0

ARGENTINA - CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Boca Juniors	13	9	4	0	29	11	31
River Plate	13	9	2	2	33	15	29
Talleres Cordoba	13	7	3	3	23	15	24
Racing Club	13	7	2	4	22	19	23
Velez Sarsfield	13	6	4	3	24	15	22
Colon Santa Fe	13	6	2	5	17	20	20
Banfield	13	5	4	4	18	14	19
Quilmes	13	4	6	3	14	14	18
Newell's OB	13	3	8	2	22	17	17
Independiente	13	4	5	4	16	18	17
Arsenal	13	3	7	3	11	15	16
Atletico Rafaela	13	4	3	6	16	18	15
Lanus	13	4	3	6	15	18	15
Nueva Chicago	13	2	8	3	14	18	14
San Lorenzo	13	2	7	4	12	14	13
Estudiantes	13	3	4	6	13	22	13
Olimpo	13	3	3	7	11	21	12
Gimnasia LP	13	2	5	6	17	19	11
Rosario Central	13	2	3	8	13	23	9
Chacarita Jnrs	13	1	5	7	14	28	8

LEADING GOALSCORERS
11 Rolando Zarate (Velez Sarsfield)
8 Fernando Cavenaghi (River Plate)
8 Aldo Osorio (Talleres Cordoba)
7 Mauro Rosales (Newell's Old Boys)

BOLIVIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 3: Bolivar 2 Real Potosi 1.
Apr 4: La Paz 2 Iberoamericana 2; Oriente 3 The Strongest 1; San Jose 2 Aurora 1; Union Central 1 Blooming 0; Jorge Wilstermann 4 Santa Cruz 2.
Apr 7: Oriente 3 Union Central 0.
Apr 11: Aurora 3 La Paz 1; Iberoamericana 0 Jorge Wilstermann 1; Real Potosi 7 Blooming 1; Santa Cruz 0 Bolivar 2.
Apr 17: San Jose 3 Oriente 1.
Apr 18: Blooming 2 Santa Cruz 3; Bolivar 4 Iberoamericana 2; La Paz 1 The Strongest 0; Union Central 3 Real Potosi 1; Jorge Wilstermann 2 Aurora 3.
Apr 20: The Strongest 4 San Jose 1.
Apr 24: Iberoamericana 2 Blooming 0; Santa Cruz 1 Real Potosi 1.
Apr 25: Aurora 1 Bolivar 0; The Strongest 2 Jorge Wilstermann 1; San Jose 2 Union Central 1; Oriente 3 La Paz 1.
Apr 28: Jorge Wilstermann 1 Oriente 0; Blooming 1 Aurora 1; Real Potosi 1 Iberoamericana 0; Union Central 1 Santa Cruz 1.
Apr 29: Bolivar 2 The Strongest 1; La Paz 3 San Jose 2.
May 1: Jorge Wilstermann 0 San Jose 0.
May 2: Santa Cruz 3 Iberoamericana 1; Real Potosi 2 Aurora 3; Bolivar 6 Oriente 1; Blooming 2 The Strongest 1; La Paz 1 Union Central 1.
May 4: Union Central 2 Iberoamericana 0; Aurora 2 Santa Cruz 0; La Paz 0 Jorge Wilstermann 1; The Strongest 3 Real Potosi 0; San Jose 1 Bolivar 1.
May 8: Jorge Wilstermann 2 Union Central 0.
May 9: Bolivar 5 La Paz 1; Santa Cruz 1 The Strongest 0; Real Potosi 4 Oriente 3; Iberoamericana 1 Aurora 1; Blooming 2 San Jose 1.

BOLIVIA - OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolivar	14	10	2	2	33	14	32
J Wilstermann	14	9	1	4	30	16	28
Aurora	14	8	3	3	30	21	27
Real Potosi	14	6	2	6	28	27	20
The Strongest	14	6	1	7	23	18	19
Union Central	14	5	3	6	16	18	18
Santa Cruz	14	5	3	6	20	26	18
San Jose	14	5	2	7	23	25	17
La Paz	14	5	2	7	19	28	17
Oriente	12	4	4	4	23	21	16
Iberoamericana	14	3	2	9	13	30	11
Blooming	12	3	1	8	14	28	10

BRAZIL

Apr 21: Parana 3 Santos 2; Figueirense 1 Internacional 0; Gremio 0 Flamengo 0; Botafogo 1 Goias 4; Sao Caetano 1 Vitoria 0; Ponte Preta 3 Corinthians 2; Cruzeiro 2 Juventude 1; Palmeiras 0 Atletico Mineiro 0.
Apr 22: Vasco da Gama 0 Criciuma 1; Paysandu 3 Fluminense 3; Sao Paulo 1 Atletico Paranaense 0; Coritiba 1 Guarani 0.
Apr 24: Goias 2 Cruzeiro 2; Flamengo 0 Ponte Preta 0; Juventude 1 Gremio 1.
Apr 25: Criciuma 1 Sao Paulo 1; Internacional 1 Palmeiras 0; Fluminense 1 Coritiba 1; Vitoria 6 Parana 1; Guarani 1 Sao Caetano 1; Atletico Mineiro 1 Vasco da Gama 1; Santos 2 Botafogo 0; Atletico Paranaense 0 Figueirense 3; Corinthians 2 Paysandu 1.
Apr 28: Figueirense 2 Santos 1; Gremio 4 Corinthians 0; Botafogo 2 Atletico Mineiro 2; Paysandu 0 Atletico Paranaense 3; Ponte Preta 2 Goias 0; Cruzeiro 2 Criciuma 2; Sao Paulo 1 Fluminense 0; Coritiba 1 Internacional 1.
Apr 29: Vasco da Gama 0 Guarani 1; Palmeiras 2 Vitoria 2; Parana 2 Flamengo 1.
May 1: Atletico Mineiro 1 Ponte Preta 2; Criciuma 1 Botafogo 0; Goias 4 Gremio 0; Internacional 1 Paysandu 0.
May 2: Flamengo 1 Sao Caetano 1; Fluminense 1 Vasco da Gama 0; Vitoria 3 Figueirense 1; Guarani 2 Sao Paulo 3; Santos 1 Cruzeiro 3; Atletico Paranaense 1 Coritiba 1; Corinthians 0 Palmeiras 4; Juventude 4 Parana 0.
May 8: Sao Caetano 5 Criciuma 0; Vasco da Gama 1 Gremio 1; Guarani 0 Atletico Paranaense 0; Santos 2 Juventude 1; Palmeiras 3 Ponte Preta 0; Parana 2 Cruzeiro 0.
May 9: Internacional 0 Fluminense 0; Botafogo 2 Paysandu 2; Vitoria 5 Flamengo 1; Goias 1 Figueirense 0; Atletico Mineiro 2 Corinthians 2; Coritiba 1 Sao Paulo 2.

BRAZIL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sao Paulo	5	4	1	0	8	4	13
Vitoria	5	3	1	1	16	6	10
Goias	5	3	1	1	11	5	10
Ponte Preta	5	3	1	1	7	6	10
Figueirense	5	3	0	2	7	5	9
Parana	5	3	0	2	8	13	9
Palmeiras	5	2	2	1	9	3	8
Sao Caetano	4	2	2	0	8	2	8
Cruzeiro	5	2	2	1	9	8	8
Internacional	5	2	2	1	3	2	8
Criciuma	5	2	2	1	5	8	8
Santos	5	2	0	3	8	9	6
Gremio	5	1	3	1	6	6	6
Fluminense	5	1	3	1	5	5	6
Guarani	5	1	2	2	4	5	5
At Paranaense	5	1	2	2	4	5	5
Juventude	4	1	1	2	7	5	4
Corinthians	5	1	1	3	6	14	4
At Mineiro	5	0	4	1	6	7	4
Flamengo	5	0	3	2	3	8	3
Vasco da Gama	5	0	2	3	2	5	2
Paysandu	5	0	2	3	6	11	2
Botafogo	5	0	2	3	5	11	2
Coritiba*	5	1	3	1	5	5	0

**6pts deducted for fielding ineligible player*

CHILE

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 2: Union Espanola 0 Santiago Wanderers 1.
Apr 3: Huachipato 2 U de Chile 1; Colo Colo 2 Coquimbo Unido 1; Dep La Serena 4 Cobresal 3.
Apr 4: Palestino 3 Audax Italiano 5; Everton 1 Cobreloa 3; San Felipe 1 U de Concepcion 0; Puerto Montt 0 Dep Temuco 1; Rangers 2 U Catolica 1.
Apr 8: Coquimbo Unido 4 Rangers 2.
Apr 9: Audax Italiano 3 Dep La Serena 3; U de Concepcion 2 Everton 4.
Apr 10: U Catolica 0 Union Espanola 4; Cobresal 0 U de Chile 1.
Apr 11: Santiago Wanderers 5 Puerto Montt 0; Colo Colo 2 Huachipato 4; Cobreloa 6 Palestino 1; Dep Temuco 1 San Felipe 0.
Apr 13: U de Chile 0 Audax Italiano 1.
Apr 14: Huachipato 3 Cobresal 1; Everton 5 Dep Temuco 0; San Felipe 0 Santiago Wanderers 2; Puerto Montt 1 U Catolica 1; Union Espanola 2 Coquimbo Unido 1; Rangers 1 Colo Colo 2.
Apr 15: Dep La Serena 1 Cobreloa 2.
Apr 17: Colo Colo 4 Union Espanola 1; Coquimbo Unido 4 Puerto Montt 0; U Catolica 4 San Felipe 0; Audax Italiano 4 Cobresal 0.
Apr 18: Rangers 2 Huachipato 2; Santiago Wanderers 4 Everton 0; Dep Temuco 2 Palestino 1; U de Concepcion 5 Dep La Serena 0; Cobreloa 3 U de Chile 0.
Apr 21: Huachipato 2 Audax Italiano 0; Cobresal 2 Cobreloa 3; U de Chile 3 U de Concepcion 1; Dep La Serena 2 Dep Temuco 2; San Felipe 2 Coquimbo Unido 1; Union Espanola 1 Rangers 2.
Apr 22: Everton 2 Universidad Catolica 0; Palestino 2 Santiago Wanderers 4.
Apr 24: Dep Temuco 3 U de Chile 3; U de Concepcion 0 Cobresal 0; Union Espanola 2 Huachipato 1.
Apr 25: U Catolica 2 Palestino 1; Cobreloa 1 Audax Italiano 1; Rangers 3 Puerto Montt 2; Santiago Wanderers 5 Dep La Serena 0; Colo Colo 1 San Felipe 1; Coquimbo Unido 2 Everton 0.
Apr 29: Puerto Montt 3 Colo Colo 3.
Apr 30: U de Chile 2 Santiago Wanderers 2; Dep La Serena 1 Universidad Catolica 4.
May 2: Huachipato 1 Cobreloa 2; Audax Italiano 0 U de Concepcion 2; Cobresal 0 Dep Temuco 3; Palestino 2 Coquimbo Unido 3; Everton 0 Colo Colo 2; San Felipe 0 Rangers 2; Puerto Montt 4 Union Espanola 1.
May 4: U Catolica 1 U de Chile 2.
May 5: Colo Colo 2 Palestino 1; Santiago Wanderers 2 Cobresal 0; U de Concepcion 3 Cobreloa 0; Puerto Montt 2 Huachipato 1.
May 6: Union Espanola 2 San Felipe 2; Rangers 1 Everton 0; Coquimbo Unido 4 Dep La Serena 3; Dep Temuco 2 Audax Italiano 1.
May 8: Cobresal 0 Universidad Catolica 1; Everton 0 Union Espanola 0.
May 9: Huachipato 2 U de Concepcion 2; Cobreloa 3 Dep Temuco 0; U de Chile 1 Coquimbo Unido 0; Dep La Serena 1 Colo Colo 1; Palestino 0 Rangers 0; San Felipe 1 Puerto Montt 2.
May 10: Audax Italiano 1 Santiago Wanderers 1.

CHILE - OPENING - GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Colo Colo	17	10	3	4	29	25	33
Audax Italiano	17	5	6	6	31	28	21
San Felipe	17	4	5	8	15	27	17
Cobresal	17	1	3	13	19	40	6

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Concepcion	17	9	5	3	37	17	32
Dep Temuco	17	7	3	7	24	34	24
Rangers	17	5	3	9	21	33	18
Dep La Serena	17	5	3	9	32	46	18
Palestino	17	4	2	11	34	42	14

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cobreloa	17	11	4	2	39	19	37
Coquimbo Unido	17	9	2	6	39	37	29
Union Espanola	17	7	5	5	35	32	26
Everton	17	6	3	8	22	25	21
U Catolica	17	6	1	10	29	29	19

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sant Wanderers	17	11	3	3	37	15	36
U de Chile	17	9	3	5	32	21	30
Huachipato	17	8	3	6	35	31	27
Puerto Montt	17	5	5	7	27	36	20

COLOMBIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 3: Pereira 1 America 0; Indep Medellin 2 Once Caldas 0.
Apr 4: Tulua 1 At Huila 1; Bucaramanga 4 Indep Santa Fe 0; Magdalena 2 Chico 3; Tolima 2 At Nacional 2; Dep Cali 0 At Junior 0.
Apr 5: Millonarios 5 Dep Pasto 3.
Apr 7: Indep Santa Fe 1 Tulua 1.
Apr 10: At Nacional 1 Millonarios 1.
Apr 11: Pereira 2 Tolima 2; America 1 Once Caldas 0; At Huila 0 Indep Medellin 1; At Junior 1 Bucaramanga 1; Chico 1 Envigado 0; Quindio 1 Dep Cali 1; Dep Pasto 2 Magdalena 0.
Apr 14: Millonarios 2 Pereira 1; Magdalena 2 At Nacional 3; Envigado 0 Dep Pasto 0; Dep Cali 4 Chico 2; Bucaramanga 1 Quindio 0; Tulua 1 At Junior 2; Indep Medellin 1 Indep Santa Fe 2; Once Caldas 4 At Huila 0.
Apr 17: Indep Santa Fe 2 Once Caldas 2.
Apr 18: America 2 At Huila 1; Pereira 4 Magdalena 1; Dep Pasto 0 Dep Cali 1; Tolima 2 Millonarios 0; Chico 3 Bucaramanga 1; Quindio 1 Tulua 0; At Nacional 2 Envigado 1; At Junior 5 Indep Medellin 0.
Apr 20: Envigado 1 Quindio 2.
Apr 21: Tolima 2 America 1.
Apr 24: Once Caldas 2 At Junior 1.
Apr 25: Indep Medellin 3 Quindio 0; Magdalena 0 Tolima 1; Bucaramanga 1 Dep Pasto 0; Tulua 1 Chico 2; At Huila 1 Indep Santa Fe 3; Envigado 3 Pereira 1; Dep Cali 2 At Nacional 0; Millonarios 0 America 2.
Apr 30: Pereira 0 Dep Cali 1; Dep Pasto 2 Once Caldas 1.
May 1: At Nacional 2 Bucaramanga 1.
May 2: America 1 Indep Santa Fe 0; At Junior 3 At Huila 1; Quindio 0 Once Caldas 0; Chico 0 Indep Medellin 0; Dep Pasto 1 Tulua 1; Tolima 2 Envigado 1; Millonarios 1 Magdalena 0.
May 8: Magdalena 3 America 2; Envigado 1 Millonarios 1; Indep Santa Fe 1 At Junior 0; At Huila 1 Quindio 0; Dep Cali 1 Tolima 0; Bucaramanga 1 Pereira 0; Tulua 3 At Nacional 2; Indep Medellin 3 Dep Pasto 1.
May 9: Once Caldas 0 Chico 0.
May 12: America 4 At Junior 1; Chico 2 At Huila 1; Quindio 1 Indep Santa Fe 0; At Nacional 0 Indep Medellin 2; Pereira 3 Tulua 1; Tolima 1 Bucaramanga 1; Millonarios 1 Dep Cali 0; Magdalena 2 Envigado 0.

COLOMBIA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America	17	11	1	5	29	17	34
Once Caldas	17	9	4	4	21	10	31
Dep Cali	17	9	4	4	22	14	31
At Nacional	17	9	3	5	27	21	30
At Junior	17	7	6	4	23	16	27
Indep Medellin	17	7	5	5	19	19	26
Pereira	17	7	4	6	20	16	25
Chico	17	6	6	5	23	23	24
Dep Pasto	17	7	3	7	17	19	24
Millonarios	17	6	5	6	20	21	23
Tolima	17	5	7	5	16	17	22
Bucaramanga	17	5	6	6	21	23	21
Indep Santa Fe	17	4	8	5	15	19	20
Tulua	17	5	4	8	27	29	19
At Huila	17	5	4	8	20	27	19
Quindio	17	3	6	8	11	21	15
Envigado	17	2	8	7	19	25	14
Magdalena	17	2	4	11	15	28	10

ECUADOR

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 3: Espoli 0 Olmedo 2.
Apr 4: Dep Quito 2 Aucas 1; Dep Cuenca 2 Macara 2; El Nacional 2 Barcelona 1; Emelec 2 LDU Quito 0.
Apr 11: LDU Quito 2 Emelec 0; Aucas 2 Dep Quito 2; Macara 0 Dep Cuenca 1; Olmedo 1 Espoli 1; Barcelona 2 El Nacional 0.
Apr 16: Dep Quito 1 Macara 1; El Nacional 1 LDU Quito 1.
Apr 18: Espoli 0 Aucas 0; Dep Cuenca 2 Barcelona 0; Emelec 3 Olmedo 0.
Apr 21: Olmedo 4 Dep Quito 1; Espoli 2 Emelec 4; Barcelona 0 Macara 0; LDU Quito 0 Dep Cuenca 1.
Apr 23: Aucas 4 El Nacional 2.
Apr 25: Dep Quito 2 Espoli 1; Macara 1 LDU Quito 6; El Nacional 2 Olmedo 2; Dep Cuenca 0 Aucas 0; Emelec 2 Barcelona 2.
May 2: Espoli 2 El Nacional 1; Aucas 3 Macara 1; LDU Quito 3 Barcelona 1; Olmedo 1 Dep Cuenca 1; Emelec 4 Dep Quito 1.
May 7: Dep Cuenca 2 Espoli 2.
May 8: El Nacional 2 Emelec 1; LDU Quito 1 Dep Quito 2; Macara 0 Olmedo 1.
May 9: Barcelona 2 Aucas 3.

ECUADOR – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Aucas	15	8	5	2	23	13	29
LDU Quito	15	9	1	5	30	19	28
Emelec	15	8	1	6	22	16	25
Dep Cuenca	15	6	5	4	16	12	23
Dep Quito	15	6	3	6	23	26	21
El Nacional	15	5	5	5	19	19	20
Olmedo	15	5	4	6	18	20	19
Barcelona	15	4	4	7	19	22	16
Espoli	15	2	6	7	13	23	12
Macara	15	2	6	7	12	25	12

PARAGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 3: Cerro Porteno 1 Olimpia 1.
Apr 4: Nacional 1 Sol de America 2; 12 de Octubre 2 Guarani 1; Tacuary 5 Sportivo Luqueno 1; Sport Colombia 0 Libertad 4.
Apr 7: Sport Colombia 2 Guarani 3.
Apr 10: Sol de America 0 Olimpia 0; Tacuary 1 Libertad 1; Cerro Porteno 3 Guarani 1.
Apr 11: Sport Colombia 1 Nacional 1; 12 de Octubre 0 Sportivo Luqueno 1.
Apr 14: Sport Colombia 2 Tacuary 1; Sportivo Luqueno 0 Cerro Porteno 1.
Apr 17: Sol de America 2 Sportivo Luqueno 2.
Apr 18: Tacuary 2 Nacional 1; 12 de Octubre 2 Sport Colombia 1; Cerro Porteno 2 Libertad 2.
Apr 19: Olimpia 1 Guarani 3.
Apr 22: Guarani 1 Sol de America 1.
Apr 23: Libertad 1 12 de Octubre 1; Nacional 2 Olimpia 3.
May 4: Sport Colombia 0 Cerro Porteno 1.
May 5: Nacional 1 Guarani 0; Sportivo Luqueno 2 Olimpia 3; Libertad 1 Sol de America 0; Tacuary 4 12 de Octubre 1.
May 8: Cerro Porteno 1 Tacuary 0.
May 9: Olimpia 0 Libertad 3; Guarani 1 Sportivo Luqueno 0; Sol de America 1 Sport Colombia 0; 12 de Octubre 1 Nacional 2.

PARAGUAY – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libertad	14	9	4	1	36	10	31
Cerro Porteno	14	9	4	1	21	10	31
Tacuary	14	7	3	4	24	11	24
Olimpia	14	6	4	4	20	23	22
Guarani	14	5	4	5	15	20	19
Nacional	14	4	4	6	15	19	16
12 de Octubre	14	4	3	7	15	21	15
Sportivo Luqueno	14	3	5	6	16	25	14
Sol de America	14	2	4	8	11	21	10
Sport Colombia	14	2	3	9	15	28	9

PERU

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 3: Alianza Lima 4 Melgar 0; Sport Boys 1 Universitario 2.
Apr 4: At Universidad 0 Union Huaral 2; Alianza Atletico 6 Dep Wanka 1; Universidad CV 1 Estudiantes 2; Cienciano 1 Universidad SMP 0; Coronel Bolognesi 1 Sporting Cristal 3.
Apr 10: Universitario 2 At Universidad 0.
Apr 11: Sport Boys 2 Universidad CV 2; Estudiantes 0 Coronel Bolognesi 0; Dep Wanka 1 Sporting Cristal 1; Union Huaral 1 Alianza Lima 1; Melgar 2 Cienciano 0; Universidad SMP 1 Alianza Atletico 3.
Apr 14: Alianza Atletico 0 Estudiantes 1; At Universidad 1 Universidad SMP 1; Universidad CV 1 Universitario 1; Cienciano 4 Sport Boys 1; Coronel Bolognesi 0 Union Huaral 2; Alianza Lima 3 Dep Wanka 0.
Apr 17: Union Huaral 0 Dep Wanka 0; Melgar 0 Universidad CV 1; Universitario 1 Coronel Bolognesi 0.
Apr 18: Estudiantes 1 Sporting Cristal 1; Universidad SMP 1 Alianza Lima 4; Sport Boys 2 Alianza Atletico 2; Cienciano 4 At Universidad 0.
Apr 21: Alianza Atletico 2 Universitario 0; Dep Wanka 0 Melgar 0; Sporting Cristal 4 Union Huaral 2; Atletico Universidad 1 Sport Boys 1; Coronel Bolognesi 4 Universidad SMP 1; Alianza Lima 2 Estudiantes 0.
Apr 24: Sport Boys 0 Alianza Lima 1; Cienciano 3 Coronel Bolognesi 2; Universidad CV 2 Alianza Atletico 1.
Apr 25: Universidad SMP 0 Dep Wanka 1; Estudiantes 2 Union Huaral 1; Universitario 2 Sporting Cristal 1; Melgar 0 At Universidad 1.
Apr 28: Cienciano 1 Sporting Cristal 0.
May 1: Coronel Bolognesi 3 Sport Boys 0; Sporting Cristal 3 Universidad SMP 0.
May 2: Estudiantes 2 Dep Wanka 0; Universitario 0 Alianza Lima 1; Cienciano 1 Alianza Atletico 2; At Universidad 1 Universidad CV 1; Union Huaral 3 Melgar 1.
May 5: Alianza Atletico 3 At Universidad 2; Universidad SMP 1 Union Huaral 2; Melgar 2 Estudiantes 2; Dep Wanka 1 Universitario 1; Universidad CV 1 Coronel Bolognesi 2; Alianza Lima 0 Cienciano 1.
May 6: Sport Boys 0 Sporting Cristal 2.
May 8: Universidad SMP 0 Melgar 1; At Universidad 1 Alianza Lima 1; Universitario 1 Estudiantes 0.
May 9: Cienciano 2 Dep Wanka 1; Universidad CV 0 Sporting Cristal 3; Sport Boys 3 Union Huaral 0; Alianza Atletico 1 Coronel Bolognesi 2.

PERU – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Alianza Lima	14	9	4	1	29	7	31
Cienciano	13	10	0	3	24	12	30
Alianza Atletico	14	8	3	3	28	15	27
Universitario	14	7	4	3	15	9	25
Sporting Cristal	13	7	2	4	24	14	23
Estudiantes	14	5	6	3	13	11	21
Melgar	13	5	4	4	17	17	19
Universidad CV	13	5	4	4	13	18	19
Union Huaral	14	5	3	6	16	18	18
Coronel Bolognesi	14	4	1	9	18	24	13
Dep Wanka	14	3	4	7	10	23	13
At Universidad	14	2	5	7	10	21	11
Sport Boys	14	2	4	8	13	24	10
Universidad SMP	14	1	2	11	11	28	5

URUGUAY

CLASSIFICATION STAGE

Apr 2: Dep Maldonado 0 Wanderers 1.
Apr 3: Fenix 1 Tacuarembo 2; Rentistas 2 Plaza 2; Dep Colonia 1 Penarol 0.
Apr 4: Nacional 1 Cerro 0; Central Espanol 0 Cerrito 3; Liverpool 2 Rocha 0; Miramar Misiones 4 Bella Vista M 1; Danubio 2 Defensor 0.
Apr 7: Rentistas 0 Nacional 2.
Apr 9: Bella Vista M 0 Cerrito 1.
Apr 10: Miramar Misiones 3 Plaza 2; Dep Maldonado 2 Liverpool 2.
Apr 11: Danubio 1 Nacional 0; Dep Colonia 1 Fenix 1; Defensor 0 Cerro 1; Tacuarembo 0 Penarol 1; Rocha 0 Central Espanol 0; Wanderers 1 Rentistas 0.
Apr 16: Plaza 2 Liverpool 2.
Apr 17: Nacional 1 Fenix 1; Cerro 1 Central Espanol 0.
Apr 18: Cerrito 2 Tacuarembo 1; Rentistas 1 Penarol 2; Wanderers 0 Miramar Misiones 0; Defensor 0 Dep Maldonado 0; Bella Vista M 1 Rocha 1; Danubio 1 Dep Colonia 1.
Apr 21: Penarol 0 Danubio 2.
Apr 23: Wanderers 1 Rocha 2.
Apr 24: Liverpool 1 Miramar Misiones 1; Dep Maldonado 2 Penarol 2.
Apr 25: Cerrito 1 Nacional 0; Central Espanol 0 Fenix 0; Cerro 1 Rentistas 2; Tacuarembo 1 Plaza 1; Danubio 3 Bella Vista M 1; Dep Colonia 2 Defensor 2.
Apr 28: Nacional 3 Wanderers 0; Cerro 3 Rocha 1; Tacuarembo 3 Dep Maldonado 0; Central Espanol 2 Danubio 3; Miramar Misiones 1 Rentistas 3; Plaza 2 Dep Colonia 2; Defensor 0 Liverpool 4.
May 2: Fenix 0 Danubio 4; Penarol 4 Cerro 1; Tacuarembo 0 Liverpool 1; Defensor 2 Cerrito 2; Rentistas 0 Bella Vista M 0; Plaza 0 Wanderers 1; Miramar Misiones 2 Rocha 3; Dep Maldonado 0 Dep Colonia 1.
May 5: Fenix 5 Bella Vista M 1; Cerrito 0 Penarol 4.
May 7: Plaza 2 Cerro 1.
May 8: Nacional 0 Defensor 1; Central Espanol 1 Dep Colonia 2.
May 9: Fenix 3 Liverpool 0; Rentistas 3 Tacuarembo 0; Cerrito 3 Rocha 0; Danubio 4 Miramar Misiones 3; Dep Maldonado 0 Bella Vista M 2; Wanderers 0 Penarol 1.

URUGUAY – CLASSIFICATION STAGE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Danubio	9	7	2	0	23	10	23
Cerrito	9	6	2	1	15	9	20
Penarol	9	5	2	2	15	8	17
Liverpool	9	4	4	1	14	8	16
Dep Colonia	9	3	5	1	11	9	14
Nacional	8	4	1	3	10	4	13
Fenix	9	3	3	3	16	13	12
Rentistas	9	3	3	3	12	10	12
Cerro	9	4	0	5	11	14	12
Wanderers	9	3	2	4	5	9	11
Miramar Misiones	9	2	4	3	15	15	10
Defensor	9	2	4	3	8	12	10
Rocha	9	2	3	4	10	17	9
Bella Vista M	9	2	3	4	7	14	9
Plaza	9	1	5	3	14	16	8
Tacuarembo	9	2	1	6	7	13	7
Central Espanol	8	1	3	4	6	11	6
Dep Maldonado	9	0	5	4	6	13	5

VENEZUELA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 3: Trujillanos 0 Maracaibo 0.
Apr 4: Monagas 1 Caracas 1; Estudiantes 3 Dep Tachira 2; Ital-Chacao 2 Carabobo 4; El Vigia 0 Mineros Guayana 2.
Apr 10: Dep Tachira 3 Trujillanos 0.
Apr 11: Caracas 3 Mineros Guayana 0; Carabobo 3 El Vigia 0; Maracaibo 2 Ital-Chacao 0; Monagas 1 Estudiantes 2.
Apr 14: Maracaibo 1 El Vigia 1; Trujillanos 1 Monagas 0; Mineros Guayana 0 Carabobo 1.
Apr 18: Caracas 2 Carabobo 0; Maracaibo 1 Mineros Guayana 1; Dep Tachira 5 El Vigia 4; Monagas 1 Ital-Chacao 0; Estudiantes 1 Trujillanos 0.
Apr 21: Ital-Chacao 0 Dep Tachira 2.
Apr 22: Caracas 3 Estudiantes 1.
Apr 25: Trujillanos 1 Caracas 1; Ital-Chacao 4 Estudiantes 3; El Vigia 0 Monagas 0; Mineros Guayana 1 Dep Tachira 3; Carabobo 2 Maracaibo 1.
Apr 29: Dep Tachira 2 Carabobo 1.
May 2: Caracas 4 Maracaibo 0; Monagas 1 Mineros Guayana 0; Estudiantes 4 El Vigia 1; Trujillanos 1 Ital-Chacao 1.
May 5: Dep Tachira 1 Maracaibo 1.
May 9: Ital-Chacao 1 Caracas 0; El Vigia 1 Trujillanos 1; Mineros Guayana 4 Estudiantes 2; Carabobo 1 Monagas 3; Maracaibo 4 Dep Tachira 1.

VENEZUELA – CLOSING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Caracas	18	13	3	2	36	10	42
Dep Tachira	18	10	4	4	35	24	34
Carabobo	18	10	2	6	25	19	32
Mineros Guayana	18	6	6	6	23	21	24
Monagas	18	5	8	5	16	14	23
Estudiantes	18	6	5	7	28	32	23
Ital-Chacao	18	5	5	8	19	27	20
Trujillanos	18	2	12	4	11	15	18
Maracaibo	18	3	8	7	17	24	17
El Vigia	18	1	5	12	13	37	8

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

MEXICO

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 3: Morelia 3 America 6; Tigres 2 Tecos UAG 1; Guadalajara 4 Cruz Azul 3; Necaxa 0 Pumas UNAM 1.
Apr 4: Puebla 6 Irapuato 0; Toluca 2 Veracruz 3; Pachuca 1 Atlas 1; Atlante 2 Santos 1; Gallos Blancos 4 Monterrey 4; Jaguares 4 San Luis 2.
Apr 10: Veracruz 1 Guadalajara 4; Cruz Azul 3 Necaxa 1; Monterrey 3 Tigres 3; San Luis 1 Pachuca 4; Atlas 1 Morelia 1.
Apr 11: Irapuato 0 Atlante 0; Pumas UNAM 3 Puebla 0; America 1 Gallos Blancos 1; Tecos UAG 1 Toluca 2; Santos 1 Jaguares 1.
Apr 17: Toluca 2 Monterrey 0; Guadalajara 3 Tecos UAG 1; Morelia 2 San Luis 1; Necaxa 1 Veracruz 0.
Apr 18: Pumas UNAM 0 Irapuato 0; Pachuca 2 Santos 2; Puebla 3 Cruz Azul 2; Gallos Blancos 1 Atlas 0; Jaguares 2 Atlante 1.
Apr 19: Tigres 2 America 1.
Apr 24: Veracruz 2 Puebla 1; Cruz Azul 2 Pumas UNAM 0; Monterrey 3 Guadalajara 3; San Luis 3 Gallos Blancos 0; Atlas 2 Tigres 2.
Apr 25: America 2 Toluca 1; Tecos UAG 3 Necaxa 0; Irapuato 0 Jaguares 0; Atlante 3 Pachuca 2; Santos 6 Morelia 0.
May 1: Gallos Blancos 2 Santos 0; Toluca 2 Atlas 2; Cruz Azul 3 Irapuato 3; Tigres 3 San Luis 3; Guadalajara 0 America 1; Necaxa 1 Monterrey 1.
May 2: Pumas UNAM 6 Veracruz 1; Pachuca 3 Jaguares 3; Puebla 0 Tecos UAG 1; Morelia 0 Atlante 3.
May 7: Santos 2 Tigres 3.
May 8: Jaguares 2 Morelia 1; Veracruz 2 Cruz Azul 6; Monterrey 2 Puebla 2; San Luis 1 Toluca 1; Atlas 1 Guadalajara 1.
May 9: Pachuca 1 Irapuato 1; Atlante 2 Gallos Blancos 1; Tecos UAG 1 Pumas UNAM 3; America 3 Necaxa 2.

MEXICO – CLOSING – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Toluca	18	7	6	5	27	24	27
Pachuca	18	6	8	4	31	29	26
Atlas	18	5	9	4	27	25	24
Puebla	18	5	5	8	26	26	20
Monterrey	18	2	12	4	26	27	18

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jaguares	18	12	5	1	35	20	41
Tigres	18	6	5	7	37	37	23
Cruz Azul	18	6	4	8	34	32	22
Morelia	18	5	4	9	21	34	19
San Luis	18	4	6	8	22	31	18

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pumas UNAM	18	11	5	2	39	17	38
America	18	8	5	5	31	26	29
Gallos Blancos	18	5	8	5	24	27	23
Santos	18	6	3	9	30	26	21
Tecos UAG	18	5	2	11	30	38	17

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guadalajara	18	9	4	5	26	22	31
Atlante	18	6	6	6	27	26	24
Irapuato	18	5	8	5	20	28	23
Necaxa	18	5	6	7	22	25	21
Veracruz	18	4	5	9	23	38	17

LEADING GOALSCORER
16 Nestor Silvera (Tigres)

UNITED STATES

Apr 3: DC United 2 San Jose Earthquakes 1; Columbus Crew 1 MetroStars 3; Kansas City Wizards 0 Chicago Fire 0; Dallas Burn 1 Colorado Rapids 1; Los Angeles Galaxy 3 New England Revolution 2.
Apr 10: San Jose Earthquakes 0 Chicago Fire 0; Los Angeles Galaxy 1 DC United 1.
Apr 17: Chicago Fire 0 Dallas Burn 2; Colorado Rapids 1 Los Angeles Galaxy 1; Kansas City Wizards 1 Columbus Crew 0; New England Revolution 1 San Jose Earthquakes 3; MetroStars 3 DC United 2.
Apr 24: Colorado Rapids 1 San Jose Earthquakes 0; DC United 1 Chicago Fire 2; Dallas Burn 1 Kansas City Wizards 0; Los Angeles Galaxy 2 Columbus Crew 0.
Apr 25: MetroStars 1 New England Revolution 1.
May 1: Chicago Fire 3 MetroStars 0; Columbus Crew 0 Dallas Burn 0; Kansas City Wizards 2 Colorado Rapids 0; New England Revolution 2 Los Angeles Galaxy 1; San Jose Earthquakes 1 DC United 1.
May 7: Colorado Rapids 0 New England Revolution 0.
May 8: DC United 1 Columbus Crew 1; Dallas Burn 1 Los Angeles Galaxy 3; Kansas City Wizards 2 Chicago Fire 2; San Jose Earthquakes 5 MetroStars 5.

USA – EASTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chicago Fire	6	2	3	1	6	4	9
MetroStars	5	2	2	1	12	12	8
DC United	6	1	3	2	7	8	6
New England	5	1	2	2	6	8	5
Columbus Crew	5	0	2	3	2	7	2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LA Galaxy	6	3	2	1	11	7	11
Kansas City	5	2	2	1	5	3	8
Dallas Burn	5	2	2	1	5	4	8
San Jose	6	1	3	2	10	10	6
Colorado Rapids	5	1	3	1	3	4	6

LEADING GOALSCORER
6 Carlos Ruiz (Los Angeles Galaxy)

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

2nd rnd, 1st legs

Apr 9: Zamalek (Egy) 3 APR FC (Rwa) 2.
Apr 10: Africa Sports (IvC) 4 AS Douanes (Tog) 1; Al Ahly (Egy) 0 Al Hilal (Sud) 1; Esperance (Tun) 4 Sahel SC (Ngr) 0; Etoile Sahel (Tun) 2 Hassania Agadir (Mor) 0; AS Port Louis 2000 (Mrs) 1 SuperSport United (SAf) 1; Raja Casablanca (Mor) 2 Jeanne d'Arc (Sen) 0; St Michel United (Sey) 2 Orlando Pirates (SAf) 3; USM Alger (Alg) 8 ASFA Yennenga (BuF) 1; Zanaco (Zam) 0 Bakili Bullets (Mwi) 1.
Apr 11: AmaZulu (Zim) 0 Petro Atletico (Ang) 0; ASEC Abidjan (IvC) 1 Asante Kotoko (Gha) 1; Canon Yaounde (Cam) 3 AS Vita Club (DRC) 0; Cotonsport (Cam) 4 St Michel Oueneze (Con) 1; Enyimba (Nig) 3 Diaraf Dakar (Sen) 0; Hearts of Oak (Gha) 4 AS Aviacao (Ang) 1.

2nd rnd, 2nd legs

Apr 24: APR FC 4 Zamalek 1 *APR 6-4 on agg*; ASFA Yennenga 2 USM Alger 2 *USM Alger 10-3 on agg*; Bakili Bullets 0 Zanaco 1 *Agg 1-1. Bakili Bullets 6-5 on pens*; Diaraf Dakar 2 Enyimba 0 *Enyimba 3-2 on agg*; Hassania Agadir 0 Etoile Sahel 0 *Etoile Sahel 2-0 on agg*; SuperSport United 2 AS Port Louis 2000 0 *SuperSport 3-1 on agg*; AS Vita Club 1 Canon Yaounde 1 *Canon Yaounde 4-1 on agg*.
Apr 25: Al Hilal 0 Al Ahly 0 *Al Hilal 1-0 on agg*; AS Aviacao 1 Hearts of Oak 1 *Hearts of Oak 5-2 on agg*; Asante Kotoko 0 ASEC Abidjan 0 *Agg 1-1. Asante Kotoko on away goals*; AS Douanes 0 Africa Sports 1 *Africa Sports 5-1 on agg*; Jeanne d'Arc 2 Raja Casablanca 0 *Agg 2-2. Jeanne d'Arc 5-4 on pens*; Orlando Pirates 5 St Michel Utd 1 *Orlando Pirates 8-3 on agg*; Sahel SC 0 Esperance 1 *Esperance 5-0 on agg*; St Michel Oueneze 1 Cotonsport 0 *Cotonsport 4-2 on agg*.
Apr 27: Petro Atletico 2 AmaZulu 1 *Petro Atletico 2-1 on agg*.

AFRICAN CONFEDERATION CUP

2nd rnd, 1st legs

Apr 10: Al Nasr (Lby) 1 Enugu Rangers (Nig) 0; Deportivo Mongomo (EqG) 1 Stella Abidjan (IvC) 1; Etoile Filante (BuF) 0 Wydad Casablanca (Mor) 1; Leopards Transfoot (Mad) 1 Wits University (SAf) 1; Mtibwa Sugar (Tan) 0 Santos (SAf) 3.
Apr 11: Dynamos (Zim) 0 King Faisal Babies (Gha) 1; CS Etoile Guinea (Gui) 1 Chabab Belouizdad (Alg) 0; Express FC (Uga) 1 Lobi Stars (Nig) 1; Green Buffaloes (Zam) 6 DC Motema Pembe (DRC) 1; InterClube (Ang) 1 AS Douanes (Sen) 2; Ismaili (Egy) 2 Stade Tunisien (Tun) 1; Petro Huambo (Ang) 1 Liberty Pros (Gha) 0; PWD Bamenda (Cam) 1 TP Mazembe Englebert (DRC) 0; Royal Armed Forces (Mor) 3 Olympic FC (Ngr) 0; US Mbila Nzami (Gab) 2 Sable Batie (Cam) 2; Wallidan (Gam) 2 Club Africain (Tun) 1.

2nd rnd, 2nd legs

Apr 24: Club Africain 3 Wallidan 0 *Club Africain 4-2 on agg*; AS Douanes 2 InterClube 1 *AS Douanes 4-2 on agg*; Chabab Belouizdad 2 CS Etoile Guinea 1 *Agg 2-2. Etoile Guinea on away goals*; King Faisal Babies 4 Dynamos 0 *King Faisal Babies 5-0 on agg*; Olympic FC 2 Royal Armed Forces 3 *Royal Armed Forces 6-2 on agg*; Stade Tunisien 2 Ismaili 0 *Stade Tunisien 3-2 on agg*; Wits University 2 Leopards Transfoot 2 *Agg 3-3. Leopards on away goals*; Wydad Casablanca 0 Etoile Filante 0 *Wydad 1-0 on agg*.
Apr 25: Enugu Rangers 4 Al Nasr 0 *Enugu Rangers 4-1 on agg*; Liberty Pros 5 Petro Huambo 1 *Liberty Pros 5-2 on agg*; Lobi Stars 3 Express FC 0 *Lobi Stars 4-1 on agg*; Sable Batie 1 US Mbila Nzami 1 *Agg 3-3. Sable Batie on away goals*; Stella Abidjan 2 Deportivo Mongomo 0 *Stella 3-1 on agg*; TP Mazembe Englebert 2 PWD Bamenda 1 *Agg 2-2. PWD on away goals.*
Apr 26: DC Motema Pembe 2 Green Buffaloes 1 *Green Buffaloes 7-3 on agg.*

Santos v Mtibwa Sugar – Mtibwa withdrew after 1st leg; Santos walkover

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Apr 6: Zob-Ahan (Irn) 3 Qatar Sports Club (Qat) 3.
Apr 21: Qatar Sports Club 0 Zob-Ahan 0.
May 5: Pakhtakor (Uzb) 2 Zob-Ahan 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pakhtakor	3	2	0	1	3	1	6
Zob-Ahan	4	1	2	1	4	5	5
Qatar SC	3	0	2	1	3	4	2

Al Riffa (Bhn) withdrew after first two games; results annulled

Group B

Apr 6: Al Wahda (UAE) 3 Al Quwa Al Jawiya (Irq) 0.
Apr 7: Al Sadd (Qat) 0 Al Qadisiya (Kuw) 1.
Apr 20: Al Quwa Al Jawiya 0 Al Wahda 0; Al Qadisiya 0 Al Sadd 0.
May 5: Al Sadd 0 Al Wahda 0; Al Qadisiya 1 Al Quwa Al Jawiya 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Wahda	4	1	3	0	3	0	6
Al Sadd	3	1	2	0	1	0	5
Al Quwa Al J'ya	3	0	1	2	0	4	1

Al Qadisiya were disqualified from the competition on May 7 because of incidents during their home game against Al Sadd on April 20; all results annulled

Group C

Apr 6: Al Shorta (Irq) 1 Al Hilal (Sau) 2.
Apr 21: Al Hilal 2 Al Shorta 0.
May 4: Al Shorta 2 Al Sharjah (UAE) 3.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Sharjah	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Al Hilal	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
Al Shorta	4	0	0	4	3	9	0

Al Ahli (Bhn) withdrew before group games began

Group D

Apr 7: Sepahan (Irn) 3 Al Ittihad (Sau) 2.
Apr 20: Al Ittihad 4 Sepahan 0.
Apr 21: Al Arabi (Kuw) 3 Neftchi (Uzb) 2.
May 4: Neftchi 1 Sepahan 3; Al Arabi 0 Al Ittihad 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Ittihad	5	3	1	1	11	4	10
Sepahan	5	3	1	1	12	9	10
Al Arabi	4	1	2	1	5	6	5
Neftchi	4	0	0	4	4	13	0

Group E

Apr 6: Jubilo Iwata (Jap) 2 Shanghai Shenhua (Chn) 1.
Apr 7: Chonbuk Motors (SKo) 4 BEC Tero Sasana (Tha) 0.
Apr 20: BEC Tero Sasana 0 Chonbuk Motors 4.
Apr 22: Shanghai Shenhua 3 Jubilo Iwata 2.
May 5: Shanghai Shenhua 1 BEC Tero Sasana 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jubilo Iwata	4	3	0	1	9	5	9
Chonbuk Motors	4	3	0	1	10	2	9
Shanghai S'hua	5	2	0	3	6	9	6
BEC Tero Sasana	5	1	0	4	4	13	3

Group F

Apr 6: Hoang Anh Gia Lai (Vie) 0 Krung Thai Bank (Tha) 1.
Apr 7: PSM Makassar (Ins) 0 Dalian Shide (Chn) 1.
Apr 21: Krung Thai Bank 2 Hoang Anh Gia Lai 2; Dalian Shide 2 PSM Makassar 1.
May 4: Dalian Shide 3 Krung Thai Bank 1.
May 5: PSM Makassar 3 Hoang Anh Gia Lai 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dalian Shide	5	5	0	0	10	2	15
Krung Thai Bank	5	2	1	2	7	9	7
Hoang Anh Gia Lai	5	1	1	3	7	9	4
PSM Makassar	5	1	0	4	7	11	3

Group G

Apr 7: Binh Dinh (Vie) 2 Persik Kediri (Ins) 2; Yokohama F Marinos (Jap) 1 Songnam Ilhwa Chunma (SKo) 2.
Apr 21: Persik Kediri 1 Binh Dinh 0; Songnam Ilhwa Chunma 0 Yokohama F Marinos 1.
May 5: Yokohama F Marinos 6 Binh Dinh 0.
May 11:

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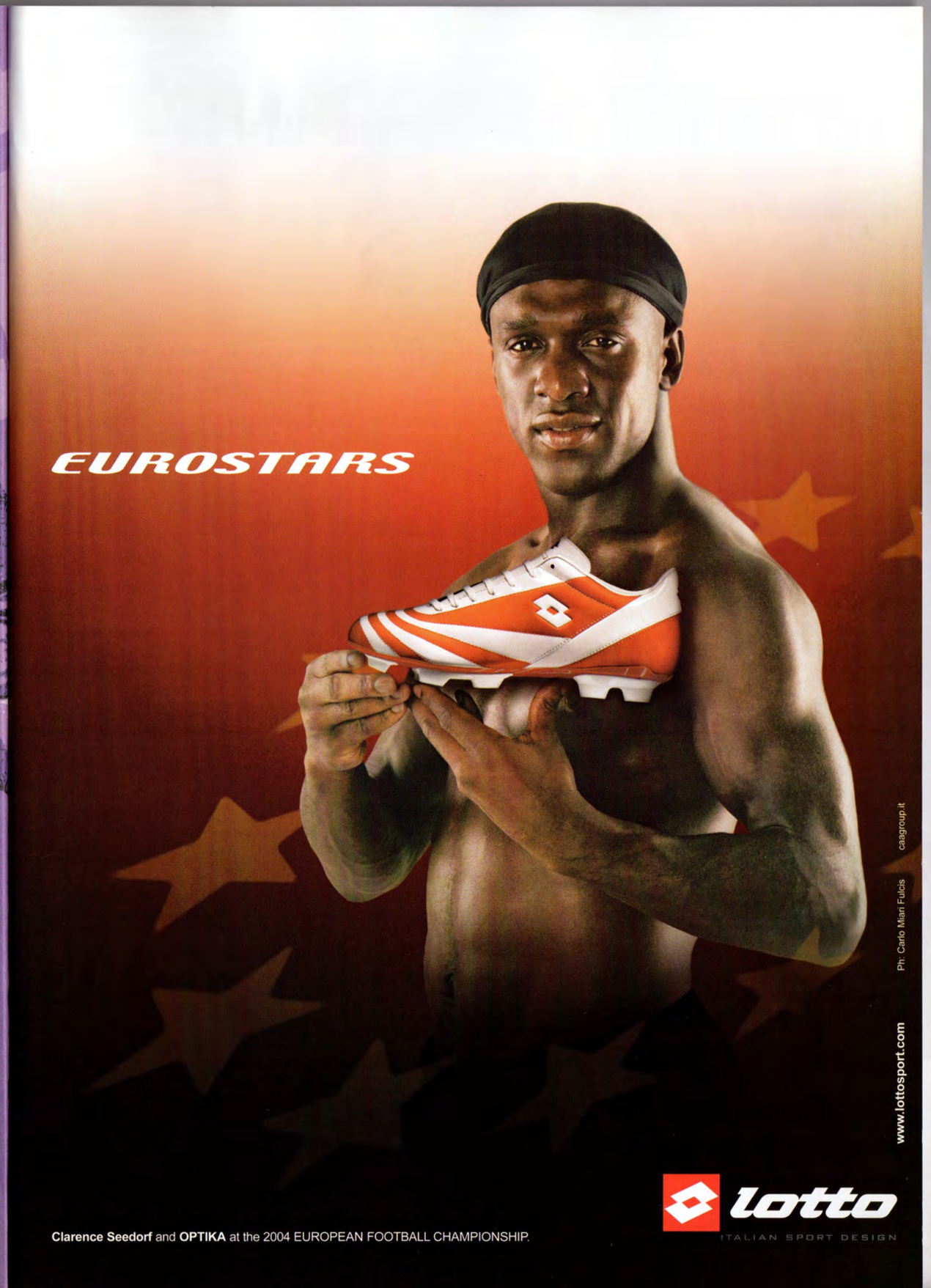

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